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Susan Jennifer Vansteenkiste

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# PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH ON FOOD SECURITY WITH URBAN WOMEN IN CAP HAITIEN, HAITI: A FEMINIST POLITICAL ECOLOGY APPROACH

(Spine title: Women's Food Security in Urban Haiti)

(Thesis Format: Monograph)

by

**Susan Jennifer Vansteenkiste**

Graduate Program in Geography

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Arts

School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies

The University of Western Ontario

London, Ontario, Canada

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THE UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN ONTARIO
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The thesis by

**Susan Jennifer Vansteenkiste**

entitled:

**Participatory Action Research on Food Security with Urban Women in Cap Haitien, Haiti: A Feminist Political Ecology Approach**

is accepted in partial fulfilment of the
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# ABSTRACT

**Abstract**

In Cap Haitien, Haiti, thirty poor urban women volunteered to become participants in a Participatory Action Research project to investigate their own food insecurity. Drawing upon feminist political ecology literature, and combined with recent field work, this research maps the affect of Haiti's changing food economy on the reproduction of local socio-economic patterns for the procurement of food. Qualitative semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions were employed to elucidate the voices of urban female participants to explain how the global food economy and social norms shape the four arenas in which women bargain for food: the household, community, market and institutions. It was determined that intra-household and extra-household bargaining was embedded in wider social and state institutions impacting their strategies, heightening the women's food insecurity and leaving their suffering invisible to the neoliberal agenda that altered Haiti's food economy.

***Keywords:*** Haiti; Food Security; Women; Urban; Gender; Agriculture; Participatory Action Research.

# DEDICATION

To my loving and supportive husband Greg and my two beautiful sons Ryan and Michael,

and

to all those women who suffer so needlessly in this unjust world.

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my heartfelt thanks to everyone who contributed and supported me through this endeavour. First and foremost I would like to thank all the participants I interviewed and in particular the women participants in Cap Haitien who gave selflessly of their time and entrusted their life stories and private suffering to me. I am honoured to have become such an intimate part of your lives.

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Paul and Grace who supported me throughout my two years and who really convinced me that I could succeed, and to Martin Healy from cartography who aided in the creation of the informative maps found within this study. Also, thank you to my wonderful professor Dieufert Bellot who spent endless hours teaching me Creole and the intricacies of Haitian culture.

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AAA Agro Action Allemande

AFASDA Association Femmes Soleil d'Haiti

CECI Centre for International Studies and Cooperation

CIDA Canadian International Development Agency

CRS (Catholic Relief Services)

CNSA Centre National Pour la Securite Alimentaire

DHS Demographic Health Survey

FAO Food and Agriculture Organization

FGD Focus Group Discussion

FNUAP United Nations Population Fund

GDP Gross Domestic Product

HDI Human Development Index

IDB Inter-American Development Bank

IDRC International Development Research Centre

IMF International Monetary Fund

INTERPOL International Criminal Police Organization

IOM International Organization for Migration

MINUSTAH United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti

NGO Non-government Organization

PAR Participatory Action Research

RCH Rice Corporation of Haiti

SAP Structural Adjustment Program

SHADA Société Haitiano-Américaine de Developpement Agricole

SSI Semi-Structured Interviews

UCP Urban Community Project

UDHR Universal Declaration of Human Rights

UNDP United Nations Development Programme

UNESCO United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

UNICEF United Nations Children's Fund

USAID United States Agency for International Development

WB World Bank

WFP World Food Programme

# Chapter One
# Introduction to Food Security Research in Haiti

## 1.1 Research Context

Haiti is marked with reminders of its colonial past and subject to post independence neo-colonialism. Currently, this marking is an arrangement of foreign direct investment focused upon the apparel industry to extract cheap labour and a narrow export base of cheap tropical commodities: primarily mangos, cocoa, essential oils, and coffee (FAO 2010). The country's major imports include manufactured goods, staples of raw and processed rice, wheat flour, corn meal, beans, soya oil and processed sugar. This spatial trade arrangement means that Haiti is dependent on imported food for survival (FAO 2010). However, this food is not distributed equally amongst the population but apportioned based on a person's class, age and gender, leaving much of the population to employ extraordinary survival strategies to achieve minimal food security.

With an emphasis on debt repayment and market liberalisation, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund during the 1980s and 1990s restructured Haiti's economy with the Structural Adjustment Program (SAP). This restructuring resulted in, among other attributes, reduced size of Haiti's government, reduced protection for Haiti's domestic markets and reduced social programming. Absent are tariffs to protect the agricultural sector from cheap foreign imports and agricultural extension services to fortify Haiti's own national agricultural production. Also absent are credit programs and physical infrastructure to facilitate agricultural growth.

The rearrangement of Haiti's economy through SAP was a 'cookie cutter' approach to debt restructuring that was applied to many developing nations regardless of the countries individual characteristics (Weis 2007). The neoliberal[1] ideology opened up

[1] Neoliberalism, as explained by David Harvey (2005), sets market exchange (and its contractual relations) as the guide to all human action, replacing ethical beliefs with the ideology that by maximizing the reach and frequency of market transactions that the greater social good will also be achieved. Thus all of human action is brought into the domain of the market. This ideology is achieved through the neoliberal state which alters the notion of freedom into freedom for economic elites.

Haiti's economy for business to the global market, changing the internal political economy of food and decimating national agricultural production. With the collapse of Haiti's agricultural sector has come mass migration to the urban centres as farmers search for food and employment, resulting in an explosion of shanty towns in the urban centres and food insecure urban poor. This research study focuses upon the lives of thirty poor urban women who struggle to find new food survival strategies in this new food system.

This pattern of producing low value export products is grounded in the historical plantation economy and the extractive nature of the Haitian colonial political-economic relations. Moreover, from this era Haitian women have inherited patterns of social norms that have developed into oppressive gender roles. Social norms structure the roles women fill in Haitian society and are responsible for both denying and enabling women access to resources, and placing women in precarious positions, juggling hunger and income strategies to ensure household survival. As a growing number of women move to the city they are faced with a lack of housing, unemployment, low wages, violence, lack of credit and limited access to land to name a few of the challenges.

This research is an exploratory study examining the social and spatial attributes of food procurement of thirty volunteer urban women who have indicated food security as a priority concern. This study enabled thirty women to become participants using Participatory Action Research methodology to address their own food security problems. The codes and categories that were revealed through this exercise were applied to an adapted version of Bina Agarwal's (1997) bargaining framework to investigate how gendered roles impact food procurement. This is new research not conducted before in urban Haiti and as such contributes to the scholarly literature in the field of urban food security in poorer countries (see Hovorka 2009; Premat 2005; Mougeot 2005).

### 1.2 Food Security

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (United Nations 2010b), Article 25 states, "Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and his family, including food." The acknowledgement that food is a

human right serves to notify that hunger is a violation of this right. The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) defines food security in the following excerpt:

> Food security, at the individual, household, national, regional and global levels (is achieved) when all people, at all times, have physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for a healthy and active life (2001).

Millions of people suffer from chronic hunger worldwide, while millions of others consume an amazing quantity, quality and variety of food. Globally we produce enough food to meet the needs of every person one and a half times, yet even as food production grows, food insecurity is on the rise in many of the world's poorest countries, demonstrating the spatial unevenness of production and consumption patterns (Mkandawire and Aguda 2009). Food security is tightly linked to income levels and thus is location specific (IRIN 2010). However, linking food security directly to income levels ignores the age, class, race, ethnic and gender attributes that regulate resource and food entitlements. As Sen (1981b:434) recognizes, "Ownership of food is one of the most primitive property rights, and in each society there are rules governing this right." The distribution of food is a measurement of power, whether we are comparing nations in the structure of the global food economy, or poor women within a local societal structure.

### 1.3 The Theoretical Underpinnings and the Relevance of Feminist Geography

Political ecology is the study of the impact that political institutions and their dominant narratives and actions have upon the socio-economic reproduction of livelihoods while considering social powers, divisions of labour, economic structures and gender relations (Robbins 2004). Political geographers explore scale, following complex relationships between the global, national and local to delineated local changes by global forces. By examining these scales feminist geographers consider the flows of power and examine who has the ability to control and construct scales and spaces (Martin 2004). Feminist geographers have long been concerned with analysing the social construction and interconnections of gender, space and culture (Robson 2006), and the geographies of positionality, or in other terms the examination of place, space, time and how identity is created and embodied within those spheres.

A feminist political ecological approach reveals the interconnectedness of different places and spaces to understand the impact of power relations, including gender relations. By revealing powerful underlying local and global structures a feminist political ecological approach can expose how local environmental, political and economic systems are shaped, enabled and constrained by national and global systems (Rocheleau, Thomas-Slayter and Wangari 1996). Feminist geographers also attempt to form a praxis in which theory, research and practice intersect, as demonstrated in this project through the use of Participatory Action Research (PAR, see Chapter Three). The objective of this approach is to ground the theory by placing the local situated knowledge and experience of marginalized urban women into the research. If executed well, PAR will aid the participants to shape the direction of the research project and will create outcomes that fit the context of the participants' lives.

Spatial processes examined within this study include the movement of food, wealth and people within borders and across boundaries. The spatial processes of the global food economy are mapped onto the concrete places and onto the lives and bodies of women as they move from rural to urban spaces and struggle to find new food security strategies. These linkages are exposed in part by investigating their shifting gendered roles. *By doing this we treat scale as a socially constructed entity (Roberts 2004).*

Discussions about Haitian politics often ignore the security of marginalized women, how they are discriminated against, and how they are denied their basic needs and right to a livelihood. Urban Haitian women are not simply outcomes of a global economy but are geographically and historically constituted as subjects deserving of their own recognition. Theorizing urban food security begins with a recognition that participants are embodied stories of migration and changing gendered roles. These stories are epiphenomena to the neoliberal processes making the investigations of these global and local linkages an important realm of inquiry.

Feminist geographer Melissa Wright (2006) posits an intriguing conceptual framework of the female body as a site of production of socially constructed, or gendered, female roles. She details how gender inequality is reinforced in factories in Mexico and China, how women embody their roles through performance, and how these

actions reify imaginary concepts about gender roles within a global discourse about factory production. These imaginary concepts begin as perceptions and materialize as social norms. This exploratory study examines how Haitian women must perform, resist, and sustain their constructed gendered roles in the procurement of food within Haiti's changing political economy.

### 1.4 Research Questions

The purpose of this research was fourfold:

1 To examine different food sources that urban women access in urban Cap Haitien
2 To explore critical social and spatial relations that affect women's food security in urban Haiti
3 To examine how urban women negotiate social and spatial inequalities
4 To determine the constraints women might face (social and spatial) in using urban agriculture to improve their food security

By employing PAR, semi-structured interviews, focus groups, and mapping exercises the volunteer women participants were able to explore their own food security, critically engage with the issue, and arrive at a solution that they felt would mitigate their own food insecurity. To aid in the analysis, this thesis employs an adapted version of Bina Argawal's Bargaining Framework (1997) to explore bargaining for food in four arenas: the household, the market, the community and with institutions.

### 1.5 Organization of Thesis

This thesis begins with a discussion in Chapter Two of the theoretical explanation of feminist political ecology and a description of the structure of Haiti's historical and current political economy of food. The objective of this chapter is to clarify that Haiti's present food shortages are a matter of Haiti's historical and structural position in the global economy and to explain the theoretical approach taken to examine gendered access to food security. In Chapter Three, I will discuss the methodological approach covering qualitative analysis, participatory action research, grounded theory, and the limitations to this research design. Specifically, I will elucidate why a feminist approach is necessary to truly understand the experiences of the participants and how this methodology will

deploy the voices of the women into my research. Chapter Four gives a detailed description of Cap Haitien and the shanty towns the women participants call home, along with a description of the Cap Haitien food shed and maps. Chapter Five reveals the outcomes of the participatory action research process and the findings from the research project while Chapter Six discusses these findings in light of the relevant scholarly literature. Finally in Chapter Seven the project is summarized, followed by a discussion of policy implications and possible future research.

# Chapter Two
# Political Ecology, Feminism and Food Security: In Theory and Historical Context

## 2.1 Introduction

To examine the structure of urban women's food insecurity at the local level in Cap Haitien requires a theoretical approach to reveal the complicated, and dynamic attributes that structure the feminised experience of food procurement. This theoretical approach must place the current situation of urban food insecurity in context through an examination of the historical and political economy of Haiti, a theoretical discussion of food security, and an examination of the gender roles of poor women in Haiti. This chapter will begin with a theoretical explanation of feminist political ecology which will then be applied to Haiti's historical and current agri-food system, the collapse of the Haitian agricultural sector, subsequent migration, and emergent food insecurity. I will then discuss the concepts of food security, entitlements, vulnerability and bargaining to explain the theoretical approach to gendered food insecurity which will be utilized in this research. Finally, I will discuss gendered roles in Haiti, rooted in the colonial and postcolonial periods which reduced women's social power and access to resources, and reinforced social and political inequalities along gender lines.

## 2.2 Contours of Political Ecology

Political ecology is the study of relationships between politics, economics, social dynamics and the environment. The study of political ecology first appeared in the latter half of the twentieth century. Paul Robbins (2004) credits Wolf in *Ownership and Political Ecology* (1972) with the first use of the term 'political ecology', linking the ecosystem with economic systems of exchange. According to Bryant and Bailey (1997), Third World political ecology emerged in the 1980s in response to a need to understand the integration of politics and the environment in light of increasing environmental crises in the Third World. Many different approaches exist within political ecology. As discussed by Robbins (2004) political ecology can be a study focused upon the economy, political institutions or the environment. According to Bryant and Bailey (1997), political

ecology can be focused upon a specific environmental problem and understanding the human impact on the physical environment. Equally they consider political ecology to include the concept of a dominant narrative and perspectives of the actors involved, examination of inter-linking political and ecological problems with respect to resilience and sensitivity of the land, or focused upon the interests, characteristics, and actions of different types of actors in political or ecological conflicts. According to Bryant and Bailey, political ecologists suggest that the costs and benefits of environmental change are usually distributed unequally among different groups. They also argue that this unequal distribution of environmental costs and benefits exacerbates existing social and economic inequalities. Furthermore political ecologists assume that because changes are not distributed equally, individual power is altered in relation to others, disrupting one's ability to control or resist the actions of other actors (1997). Watts' (1983:14) analysis of the Nigerian famine, for example, identified the "rupture of local systems as they become part of coherent and highly integrated global networks". He traced the disruption of functioning communities through colonial and postcolonial periods, which reduced their social power and access to resources, reinforcing social and political subjugation. In this research the study of political ecology focuses upon the social and political environment and the unequal access to local food markets. Environmental degradation does complicate agricultural production, especially for the subsistence farmers in the steep mountains of Haiti, however this concern is not the focus of this study.

Feminist scholarship has developed separately from political ecological studies but has converged on topics of sustainable development. During the 1990s political ecology studies began to address gender issues in the household and community with linkages to national and international levels; meanwhile, feminist studies addressed environmental issues, social theory and case studies (Rocheleau et. al 1996). Within the work of Rocheleau et al. (1996), the feminist political ecology approach was employed to explore the gendered division of resources and power that affects women's ability to control and access resources for the household and community and the inability to regulate the actions of others. More recent scholarship of Premat (2005) and Hovorka (2005) takes a political ecological approach to the study of the gendered roles of women and urban food security. These studies unpack the socio-economic status, socio-cultural

factors, and human-environment relations to explain the dynamics that women negotiate to meet their food needs in urban settings.

Using a feminist political ecological approach, I outline how in Cap Haitien, thirty urban women's changing position in the internal food trade sector coupled with their gendered roles exacerbates their food insecurity. These forces impacting the internal food trade sector are internationally situated and have spatial and temporal impacts on both people and the environment and are characterized by highly unequal power relationships between local or regional geographical areas and global political and economic processes. Bryant and Bailey attribute "a colonial legacy of integration in a global capitalist economy," referring to the political and administrative structures that were implemented during colonialism which dramatically changed the relationship between states, people and the environment (1997:7). In the case of Haiti, the country was transformed into a plantation economy, with an elite group linked to foreign interests that benefitted from exploitation of the majority.

Robbins (2004:67) suggests that political ecology must deconstruct the 'claims of truth' that the dominant narrative rests upon. In this chapter I attempt to use a political ecological approach to deconstruct the historical context (colonial and post-colonial) in which Haiti's food system and related changes in gender roles emerged, and then, to expose competing international, national and local interests in the food trade sector. The resituating of Haiti's agricultural sector for foreign interests and current integration into the global food economy has marginalized Haitian people, disrupted social structures and increased the number of food insecure urban women. The changing environment of Haiti's internal food trade sector will be examined with particular emphasis on the unequal distribution of access to food and increased inequality for thirty urban women participants. The assumption that the changing food trade has disrupted communities, increased the women's subjugation through their inability to influence the construction of social norms and affected bargaining position and food security will be considered.

### 2.2.1 Spatialized Geographies for Wealth Extraction

Byrant and Bailey (1997) declare that the theoretical justification for the state hinges on the assumption that the state acts to pursue the collective human interests. However, the state may gain power from being positioned at the union of the national and international political order. Collective interests that are perceived, articulated, and enforced by the state are removed from local knowledge, experience and interests of the poor, often undermining the livelihood systems of the poor. Being removed from the grass root actors at the local scale, the state tends to develop comprehensive global approaches to solving problems and hinders the needs of grass root actors. Haiti fits this description both historically and in the contemporary period in its colonial relationship with France, and its neo-colonial relationship with the United States.

Haiti has a unique and powerful history. European contact with Haiti and the Arawak Indians began with Christopher Columbus in 1492 (Willinsky 1998). The native inhabitants were quickly eliminated through brutal slavery and disease, and replaced by a fevered African slave trade which at its height imported an annual 29 000 slaves (Farmer 2003). The slave trade supported mercantilism,[2] a political and economic system designed to increase the revenue of the European states and enrich a wealthy elite. The wealthy elite included owners of colonial plantations in Haiti, who were well positioned with direct links to French government (Mintz 1986). Mercantilism shaped and positioned Haiti as a producer of primary, unprocessed, low value commodities and, as put by Weis, "binding the interests of the local elite to a supply of a narrow range of agricultural and mineral commodity exports" (2007:89). According to James (1963), in 1789 $218 million[3] of sugar, coffee, cocoa, hides, wood, cotton and indigo were exported to France, where the French processed these raw commodities and exported them for total revenue of $3 billion[4]. Furthermore, France benefitted through the exportation of $78

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[2] Mercantilism was a theory and system of political economy existing from the 15th to 18th century in Europe, in which nations sought precious metals with established colonies, industries and a merchant marine, in order to have a favourable balance of trade (Vaggi & Growenewegen 2003) .

[3] James quotes currency in British pounds.

[4] Haiti was France's richest colony producing 60 per cent of the world's coffee and 40 per cent of the sugar imported by Britain and France (Kipper-Black et. al 1989). This exceptional productivity was dependent on a brutal slave trade; "one of every three slaves died during his first three years of intense exploitation" (Benitez-Rojo 1992).

million of flour, wines, salted meat and other manufactured goods to the colony. The narrow commodity export focus limited Haitian innovation, diversity in agricultural products and manufacturing, and strengthened a 'colonial slave mode of production' on plantations. The agri-food system within Haiti was structured to increase the wealth of the France. Within this spatial entity was a division of labour that structured the space of existence for the black African slaves as a brutal reality of work, torture and death. The division of race was not clearly a white/black division. Mulattos, a mixture of the two races were as numerous as whites, and held favour with the white colonialist, often owning land and shops, and through their wealth, access to political power (Buck-Morss 2000). Property owning whites and mulattos (often educated in Paris) shared an identity based on property ownership (James 1963). Freed blacks were present in fewer numbers than the mulatto population and were despised by the mulattos, while black slaves were the lowest of the class formations. Division also existed within the white community between the governing Frenchmen, '*gwo blan*' or 'big foreigner,' as representatives of the King and the white colonists, '*ti blan*' or 'little foreigner,' who hated the absolute power of the governing Frenchmen (James 1963). These different identities created the basis for class polarization that exists in an altered form today, all of which had differing motivations during the Haitian revolution.

Haiti is the world's first black independent republic and the second independent nation of the western Hemisphere, after the United States. The only successful slave revolt in the world, the Haitian slave revolution (1791-1804), led by Toussaint Louverture, expelled the French from Haiti forever and frightened a world of Western powers who were building their own nations on the backs of slave labour. The strength of the revolution was underestimated by a distracted French empire who, consumed by the French revolution (beginning in 1788), ignored pleas for military reinforcements in Haiti. Within thirteen years the Haitians had achieved a successful revolt, winning independence in 1804.

Haiti's independence came at a terrible price. What was once the 'Pearl of the Antilles', the richest colony in the Caribbean, lay in ruins with the razing of almost 1100 plantations of sugar, coffee, cotton and indigo (Farmer 2003; Mintz 1974). Exports

continued, albeit at a much reduced rate and under a system of intermediaries who extracted heavily taxed agricultural produce from subsistence farmers to sell for huge profits on the global market (Farmer 2003; Hallward 2007; Bellegarde 1984). This small commercial class spatially isolated the peasantry from the global market (Farmer 2003) and enhanced class tensions between the foreign merchants, mulattos and the poor black masses. The country was divided in two with Roi Christophe overseeing the north and Alexandre Pétion ruling the south. With the death of Pétion and the suicide of Christophe the divided infant country was brought under the leadership of Jean Pierre Boyer. The disorganization of this infant country aided in undermining negotiations with France, and in 1825, Haiti was forced to make reparations to France for an extraordinary $150 million francs for France's loss of slaves and property. The deal was struck under military pressure, the threat of re-establishing slavery, and in exchange for official French recognition of Haiti's independence and patronage of commercial trade [5] (Hallward 2007; Smith 2001; Trouillet 1990). The French also negotiated a fifty percent reduction of import duties for French goods (Bellegarde-Smith 1984). This agreement effectively mortgaged Haiti's future to current times, eliminated the possibility of returning to a prosperous country, and condemned Haiti to poverty by crippling its ability to gain a better position in the structure of the global economy and a new world system.

The turn of the century in Haiti saw numerous coups, military groups and rising political unrest. The United States, with interest in foreign investment opportunities, and concern about the growing power of a small number of German residents in Haiti, turned to the Monroe Doctrine (a 1823 policy that opposed European intervention in the Western Hemisphere) and the Roosevelt Corollary (a 1904 policy based on the Monroe Doctrine, whereby the United States assumed the responsibility for direct intervention in Latin American nations in order to check the influence of European powers). These measures were used to counter an increasing German presence within Haiti's trading class, viewed by American policy makers as a 'potential strategic encroachment' (Kipper-Black 1989).

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[5] The debt payments equalled roughly 80 per cent of the national budget. Payments were completed in 1947 (Hallward, 12).

President Woodrow Wilson and his administration commenced an imperial expansion with a twenty year occupation of Haiti (1915-1934). During this American military occupation, the regime abolished a clause in the Haitian Constitution that prohibited foreigners from owning property, reinstated labour conscription, established a National Guard and systematically dismantled the French and German financial and economic control of Haiti, only to reorganize for US benefit (Farmer 2003). Vertical integration consolidated the American hold on the economy, which included shipping, mercantile houses, insurance, estate supplies and agricultural production (Farmer 2003). Some of the country's small landholdings were consolidated into large American-owned plantations. The Haitian-American Sugar Company, the United Fruit Company, and the Haitian-American Development Corporation appropriated 120,000 hectares, while the Société Haitiano-Américaine de Developpement Agricole (SHADA) received 133,400 hectares, twenty-two percent of the country`s cultivated area for rubber plantations and timber extraction with the help of the Haitian government (Bellegarde-Smith 1984).

During the 1915 occupation Americans gained signing authority by the Haitian Congress to manage customs and advise the country's finances (Blassingame 1969). According to Bellegarde-Smith (1984), by 1915 eighty percent of custom revenues were reallocated for the payment of the debt to France through American Banks, and by 1920 Haiti`s Banque Nationale was a wholly-owned subsidiary of the National City Bank of New York. Blassingame (1969) added that by controlling Haiti's debt to France, the Americans had discouraged European aggression toward Haiti and helped preserve American influence in the Caribbean. The benefits were not just geo-political but financial as well, with National City Bank enjoying the benefits of being the major handler of Haitian debt and major investor in Haiti's infrastructure projects such as the Haiti National Railway. By the end of the occupation Haiti owed the United States $40 million US for road, rail and port infrastructure (Farmer, 2003). Justified by imperialistic ideology and discourse, and put into practice by American military might, Haiti's political and economic system was restructured to further the extraction of wealth, this time not through an inhumane plantation system but through the development of capitalist ventures supported by a powerful nation. The political system was profoundly changed, with a much more centralized, repressive system of governance, including the

establishment of the National Guard. The occupation also led to increased social and racial differentiation and class segregation (Farmer 2003). The American occupation positioned Haiti in a neo-colonial relationship with the United States where debt repayments were fulfilled by the labour of the peasantry.

### 2.2.2 Multilateral Institutions, Political Regimes and Structural Adjustment in Haiti

The World Bank (WB), International Monetary Fund (IMF) and Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) are the key actors in the development of the global capitalist economy and work toward the objective of social and economic development through an agenda of financial assistance; meanwhile, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) work with the objective of technical assistance to developing nations. Multilateral institutions guided the way in promoting 'development' yet often the policies are to the benefit of wealthier nations and/or foreign corporations (Bryant and Bailey 1997). These institutions embody a highly unequal power dynamic between powerful groups and marginalized actors (e.g. nations, poor people within nations) discussing and planning development projects for people that remain objects of discussions rather than participants. As noted by Robbins, in the post-World War II era, development assistance by large multilateral lending agencies such as the World Bank poured money into agricultural intensification, dam construction and industrialization of the economies of developing nations. As early as the 1970s, however, it became clear in Haiti that real economic growth remained elusive, in part due to reliance on a few tropical commodities, whose prices were falling, and poor infrastructural investments that failed to benefit in terms of economic growth. Throughout this era the Duvalier regime built a brutal dictatorship which suppressed the majority and facilitated the foreign development agenda in Haiti, in part to obtain access to millions of aid dollars which were misappropriated for the Duvaliers' own personal use (Farmer 2003; Hallward 2007).

An example of negative multilateral investments in Haiti include the Inter-American Development Bank $54.5 million loan, in the 1950s, earmarked for the construction of the Péligre Dam, located on Haiti's largest river, the Artibonite. (Perkins

2009). While this loan appeared viable on paper, and it was assumed would increase economic growth for the country by providing much needed hydro-electric power for industry, what was not accounted for was the diversion of funds from health care, education, and other social services that supported the poor, in order to service this massive loan. The Péligre Dam destroyed almost 10,000 acres of prime agricultural land with the potential to feed 60,000 Haitians annually. Today the Artibonite valley has one of the highest rates of malnutrition in Haiti (Perkins 2009). This project demonstrated that the state and multinational institutions are far removed from understanding the needs of the poor or the complex ramifications of development. Instituting this development project further marginalized the very population it espoused to assist, and increased Haiti's debt load, setting the nation on a trajectory toward economic restructuring, known as structural adjustment, in the 1980s.

During the 1960s-1980s there was a strengthening and deepening of ties with the United States, often described as a neo-colonial relationship, with class alliances between foreign capitalists and the Haitian wealthy elites (Hallward 2007). By 1967 there were seven foreign firms with factories in light assembly (apparel industry, baseball manufacturing), by 1979 there were fifty one, and by 1986 there were over three hundred US corporations involved in light assembly (McGowan 1997). These investments were facilitated by the Duvalier regimes (1957-1986), Francois Duvalier 'Papa Doc', followed by his son Jean-Francois 'Baby Doc'. These militarized political regimes reduced taxes for investors, repressed trade unions, upheld starvation wages, and removed any restrictions on the repatriation of profits. In return, the American government supported these regimes by facilitating international loans that the Duvaliers misappropriated, stole and used to strengthen their repressive regime. It is estimated that the loans between 1964 and 1986 accounted for forty percent of Haiti's international debt (Jubilee Debt Campaign 2010). The Duvaliers were responsible for years of human rights abuses, carried out by the state-sanctioned *'tonton macoutes'*, who would brutally eliminate anyone that opposed the Duvalier regime (Farmer 2003; Hallward 2007; Wilentz 1989). The American government and multilateral institutions were aware of the misappropriation of funds and human rights abuses, yet continued to funnel loans to Haiti to ensure that Haiti remained anti-communist and open for American business.

Eventually the Duvalier regime fell as the abject misery and poverty pushed demonstrators into the streets. In an attempt to prevent damage to the extensive American investments in the country the US suspended aid payments and called for Baby Doc's resignation.

This political economy of foreign investment through an elite class deepened historical classism and social inequality, creating a structure that restricted and distorted the domestic markets. This distortion increased during the 1980s debt crisis. With US financial interests overextended, and developing nations like Haiti teetering on bankruptcy, the economic climate was justification for the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank, alongside foreign governments such as the United States to call for structural change to the global economy through neoliberal policies, namely the Structural Adjustment Program (Weis 2007).

During the mid-1980s a set of conditions known as a Structural Adjustment Program (SAP) was imposed by the IMF and World Bank upon Haiti. These 'stabilization' measures were, according to SAPRIN (2004), arranged by the IMF to impose "strict fiscal and monetary discipline on indebted countries as a condition for receiving short-term balance of payment credits. These policies were designed to generate savings and foreign exchange with which to bring countries' internal and external accounts into balance and facilitate the repayment of their foreign creditors." The 'conditionalities' of debt-restructuring included trade liberalization, reduction in the size of the public workforce, deregulation of import tariffs and investment rules, privatization of public utilities, marketing boards and state assets, and reform of the agricultural sector (SAPRIN 2004; Chomsky 1994) During the SAP era, the government of Haiti was pressured by multilateral institutions, American government representatives and Haitian business men to privatize state industries and open up the local market for imports, including the state-run sugar mill. However, once privatized, the mill was promptly closed and the new owners began to import cheaper sugar from the US and the Dominican Republic. Through disregard for the importance of domestic production, and the rising political influence and economic power of transnational corporations linked to American producers, Haiti, once the world's most profitable sugar exporters was, by

1995, importing 25,000 tons of American sugar (McGowan 1997). According to the Food and Agriculture Organization (2005-2006), value-added processing was reduced across all agricultural sectors and by 2004 only twenty three percent of all food exports were processed, compared to 78 per cent of all food imports in Haiti. Export-led policies worsened the economy, ultimately reducing per capita GDP from $1000 US in 1980 to $445 US in 2005 (FAO 2005-2006).

Twice elected, and first democratically elected Haitian leader, President Aristide[6] (1990 and 2000) understood that neoliberal policies serve to further marginalize the poor, weaken the state and strengthen the private sector (Hallward 2007). Aristide negotiated conditions in the Paris Plan (1994), a strategic paper that met the neoliberal conditions demanded by international donors (lowered tariffs, tight monetary control, privatization) but also included financial support for literacy, education, modernization of the state, and policies to limit privatization and redistribute wealth (Aristide 2000). However, "[i]n September of 1995 the IMF was insisting on a new stand-by agreement, which included all the structural adjustment provisions and none of the progressive programs or guarantees of the Paris Plan" (Aristide 2000:31). Aristide refused[7], international aid was reduced and a propaganda machine was unleashed to discredit Aristide eventually leading to his exile in a coup d'état in 2004. (Aristide 2000; Hallward 2007; Farmer 2003). With Aristide removed, powerful interest groups continued to pursue their agenda of privatization, reduction of the state, and free market liberalization.

Economic change affected by foreign interests occurs unevenly as it adapts to existing economic orders and differing societies, political systems, and ecological locations (Brant and Bailey 1997; Harvey 2005). By moving agricultural production offshore the relationship between Haitians and their economic and ecological environment has been disrupted. Foreign and Haitian elite derive their wealth by

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[6] Jean Bertrand Aristide was democratically elected twice as President of Haiti from 1990-1991 (ousted via military coup), 1994-1996 (reinstated with US support after agreeing to political and economic concessions), and 2000 to 2004 (ousted in a coup d'état supported by France, Canada and the United States) (Hallward 2007; Farmer 2003).

[7] The international community was aware that in 1996, as per the Haitian constitution, Aristide would be unable to fill another Presidential term and that Rene Préval, a more moderate candidate, would likely be elected. In 2000 Aristide was re-elected with a stronger political party and even more committed to the majority of Haiti (Hallward 2007).

controlling the means of production and extracting the production opportunity away from the majority of Haitians. This was precisely the advantage taken in Haiti by structuring the markets of staple food products to the advantage of foreign imports.

### 2.2.3 Haiti's Changing Agri-Food System

The debt crisis and resulting SAP had a devastating effect on Haiti's agricultural system. Haiti was nearly food self-sufficient in the 1980s and a net exporter of rice and sugar along with other tropical commodities (Schwartz 2008). With agricultural production thriving in the United States, export promotion was developed to bring stability to US domestic prices. According to Schwartz (2008), in 1986, Duvalier agreed to lower tariffs on imported rice, in accordance with the SAP, from thirty five to three percent, resulting in a flood of American rice to local Haitian markets. Ten years later, 2100 metric tons of US rice arrived in Haiti every week, with half imported by the Rice Corporation of Haiti (RCH), an American owned corporate subsidiary, amounting to a loss of $23 million US per year to Haitian farmers (Schwartz 2008). Simultaneously, the American 1985 Farm Bill, also known as the Food Security Act of 1985, increased subsidies to US rice growers to forty percent (Aristide 2000).

Hallward (2007) reports a drop in agricultural production from approximately fifty percent of GDP in the late 1970s to just twenty five percent in the late 1990s. According to the World Food Programme (2008), Haiti produces less than forty seven percent of its food needs, leaving the country dependent on food importation and susceptible to global food price spikes. In 2007-2008 the price of rice rose from $300 to $1000 US per metric tonne and wheat more than doubled from $200 to $450 US (Mazzeo 2009). With the collapse of the agricultural industry there has been a mass exodus from the rural landscape to urban centres in search of food, employment and services. For instance Cap Haitien's average annual population growth rate between 2000 to 2008 was 5.1 % per year (UNICEF 2010). With the Haitian agricultural system crumbling, imports of US subsidized products continued to escalate (Table 2.1) with both rice and wheat imports from the US more than doubling during the first decade of the new century. Transnational corporations and the Haitian elite have squeezed surplus wealth from the

Haitian economy by displacing local food production with importation and creating a mass of food insecure people.

**Table 2.1 Imports of U.S. Rice and Wheat Products (2003–09)**

| Imports of US Food (Metric Tonnes) | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Year | 2003–4 | 2004–5 | 2005–6 | 2006–7 | 2007–8 | 2008–9 |
| All Rice Products | 144,350 | 157,933 | 249,673 | 297,579 | 283,408 | 304,355 |
| All Wheat Products | 48,258 | 75,956 | 129,767 | 27,996 | 142,619 | 110,225 |

*Source:* Foreign Agricultural Service 2009.

Rice was not the only agricultural product negatively affected by the reduction in tariffs and trade liberalization. Tropical products declined in price beginning in the 1970s due to multinational corporations' vertical integration, ability to control prices, structural overproduction and industrial substitution; for instance, there was a technological breakthrough of the processing of corn into high fructose corn syrup (Weis 2007). Corn sweetener easily undercut the price of sugar from sugar cane (Patel 2007), one of Haiti's primary commodities. The combination of food dumping, commodity substitution and declining prices for Haiti's primary commodities set the country on a trajectory toward food insecurity.

As of 2010, food aid continues to undermine the Haitian agri-food system. According to Schwartz, "Each year some 40,000,000 kg of food moves through [CARE] warehouses" (2008:83). Furthermore, he argues that, much of the CARE[8] food can be found in the local markets, displacing locally grown products and putting farmers out of business. Schwartz (2008) reports that, CARE Haiti and Catholic Relief Services (CRS) get paid a fee every time they receive food from USAID, in addition USAID gives CARE Haiti and CRS shipments of food to be monetized on the local market to cover local and

[8] CARE is one of the largest international development and humanitarian organizations dedicated to fighting global poverty in over 70 countries. http://www.care-international.org/About-Care/

American operating costs. Twenty percent of the money made from local sales is returned to Baltimore to cover their operational costs. In fact, as quoted by Schwartz, Niche Pierre, assistant director at CARE stated, "Five million of CARE Haiti's $15 million annual budget is from monetized food, food that we sell directly on the market. The rest of the money comes in cash from USAID and donations" (2008:95). Agence Française de Développement measured the impact of two hundred and twenty-five metric tons of corn their organization sold on the local market and recorded a fifty percent drop in the local market price with the first shipment, and an additional twenty percent drop with the second (Schwartz 2008). Food aid does not usually arrive immediately following a catastrophe but often during the following year's harvest, thereby damaging local farmers' livelihoods (Schwartz 2008). The earthquake of January 12, 2010 occurred after this research was completed. Food aid shipments and the complaints of local market disruption continue (NYU School of Law Center for Human Rights and Global Justice, Partners in Health, RFK Center for Justice & Human Rights, Zanmi Lasante 2010).

**Table 2.2 Haitian Consumption Patterns**

| Period | Rice | Beans | Maize | Wheat | Sorghum | Soybean Oil | Refined Sugar | Sweet Potatoes | Plantain | Roots & Tubers |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Kcal/capita/day | | | | | | | | | |
| 1961 | 82 | 75 | 440 | 49 | 308 | 23 | 88 | 93 | 63 | 205 |
| 1970 | 104 | 68 | 387 | 70 | 263 | 42 | 90 | 115 | | |
| 1980 | 158 | 74 | 262 | 226 | 148 | 59 | 118 | 104 | | |
| 1990 | 270 | 79 | 188 | 199 | 109 | 11 | 121 | 64 | | |
| 2000 | 392 | 54 | 243 | 271 | 44 | 163 | 220 | 45 | 38 | 172 |

Source: FAO 2009

The decline of local production and the replacement of staples in the markets with cheap foreign imports translated into a change in daily diets. Weis (2007) notes the changing cultural diet in the Caribbean by the replacement of traditional local grains with imported grains. The same change can be observed in Haiti. Table 2.2 displays the change in consumption patterns from 1961 to 2000. Imported rice, wheat, refined sugar and soybean oil in the market have replaced traditional consumption of beans, maize, sorghum, plantain, sweet potatoes and other roots and tubers. These consumption changes were verified by participating women during field work.

These changes occurred during the implementation of the SAP beginning in the 1980 and deepened and intensified with time. The dietary changes are marked by a reduction in variety and healthy choices. The global food economy is driven by oversupply, not supply and demand. When naturally occurring markets were unavailable, American producers worked hand in hand with USAID, American foreign policy makers and Haitian elite to construct a market in Haiti for both food aid and cheap food products. The deeper integration of Haiti's agri-food trade into the global food economy destroyed Haitian national agricultural production.

### 2.3 Urban Food Security

In the late 1970s rural to urban migration began in developing countries. At this time urban food security was politically important, and was considered a problem of food supply and volatile prices changes (Maxwell 1999). Ongoing urban population growth, rural migration and structural adjustment policies, which removed price controls, increased urban poverty and unemployment all worked to increase urban food insecurity in the 1980s and 1990s (SAPRIN 2004; Maxwell 1999). The problem of urban food insecurity by the 1990s, however, commanded less political attention in part because it was an issue of access rather than food supply. Several studies in the last decade have drawn attention to the role of women in urban agriculture (Premat 2005; Hovorka 2009). These studies examined the role of urban agriculture and the difficulties faced by the growing number of urban poor who are food insecure. Hovorka (2009) examined gendered attributes of the social structures, institutions and circumstances that affect women participating in commercial urban agriculture in Botswana. Premat (2005) examined the socio-cultural differences in Cuba that influence women's urban agricultural discourses and practices. To build on this work, my research considers the changing gendered roles for women upon migration in the changing political economy of Haiti's food system, examining the gendered barriers to food security and participation in urban agriculture as well as how they attempt to resist these gendered barriers

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### 2.3.1 Food Security

This research study focuses on women's urban food security in Haiti, how spatial and social constraints impact food procurement and if urban agriculture may address this concern. Food security is often defined as access to enough food by all people at all times to ensure an active and healthy life at the household level, for all of its members (Maxwell & Frankenburg 1992; Von Braun et al. 1993; Maxwell 2001). The three main attributes of food security have been defined as availability, access and adequacy: food availability is defined as the presence of sufficient quantities of appropriate food from domestic production, commercial imports or donors; access refers to adequate income or resources to obtain the appropriate levels of food required to maintain adequate consumption; and finally, adequacy refers to the food supply being safe, nutritious, culturally appropriate and available in the necessary variety and quantity (USAID 1992, Mkandawire & Aguda 2009).

Often food security is correlated with poverty; the poor are often the most vulnerable by definition, but neither are all poor people equally hungry, nor is it necessarily the poorest who face the greatest risk (Swift, 1989). Research addressing the topic of gendered roles in Haiti has identified women's lack of rights, particularly in reference to adequate healthcare (Farmer 2005; Maternowska 2006). Further academic work examining rights and gender differences is needed in the area of food security and rural-urban linkages in Haiti. Whether an individual is food insecure is better understood using the concepts of entitlements and vulnerability.

## 2.4 The Entitlement Approach

In 1981, Sen published his groundbreaking book *Poverty and Famines* which outlined his 'entitlement approach' to hunger and starvation. He argued that hunger and starvation ought to be viewed in terms of the collapse of entitlements, rather than a lack of food availability. Therefore, individuals and households face food shortages not because of a food deficit, but because they do not have the entitlements necessary to obtain adequate food. Sen argued that "Entitlements are sources of welfare or income that are realized or are latent. They are the set of alternative commodity bundles that a person

can command in a society using the totality of rights and opportunities that he or she faces" (1981b:497). There are two types of entitlements that impact food security: 1) endowments (owned assets such as land) and; 2) exchange entitlements, which are mediated by social relations (Sen 1981). According to Sen, these two types of entitlements are the means by which people avoid food insecurity.

Assets refer to owned or accessible property such as agricultural land that may be used for production, or in urban settings, that may be used to secure rental income or for home-based production activities. Assets may also include any capital assets that could be used for income generation, such as a truck, motorcycle, bicycle, or in the context of this case study, a wheelbarrow, food cooler, or food fryer which are the capital basis of marketing activities. Endowments also include a person's personal or family's labour, health and education, and social networks, such as claims on friendship, kinship, community, government, and non-government organizations (Swift 1989). The poor have a complex list of assets to draw from when coping with food insecurity.

Exchange entitlement refer to the range of goods and services that a person can access by converting their endowments (assets, resources, food, labour and education). As Sen delineates, failures of entitlement might occur through the alienation of land (loss of ownership, rental rights, usurp rights, communal rights), or in the loss of exchange entitlements (loss of employment, worsening terms of trade) (Sen 1992). Some groups are more vulnerable than others. Landless rural labours and pastoralist nomads, for example, are susceptible to rising prices, the latter also being subject to the encroachment of capitalist agriculture that threatens their grazing land (Sen, 1992). Agarwal (1997) adds to this discussion by arguing that qualitative factors such as gendered social norms and perceptions determine entitlements. These factors materialize as an underestimation of a woman's needs, her productive power and wage contributions, and her worth in the labour market, thereby reducing her importance and her bargaining ability (Agarwal 1997).

## 2.5 Vulnerability

The concept of vulnerability builds on the notion of entitlements. Vulnerability can be defined as the ability of an individual, household or community to respond to the

external stresses (ecological, economic, social or political) to ensure their well-being, and includes food security (Moser 1996; Moser 1998; Watts and Bohle 1993). Watts and Boyle (1993) argue that the causal structure of vulnerability can be considered from multiple vantage points: 1) spatial factors (local, regional and transnational); 2) temporal factors (a long-term structural condition or a short-term circumstance); 3) political, economic or environmental factors or; 4) social relations (e.g. age, gender, ethnicity).

Vulnerability occurs within a social-ecological system which has the capacity for adaptive change. That is, both biophysical processes and social relations mediate the use of resources and a given household or individual's vulnerability (Adger 2006; Watts and Boyle 1993; von Braun 1991). Social, political and economic organizations play a crucial role in the mediation of the socio-ecological system, and with a household or individual's adaptation to crisis. These patterns of vulnerability to food insecurity are situated in the wider historical political economy of food resources and can be analyzed and mapped in both a temporal and spatial sense.

Watts and Boyle (1993:47-48) explain vulnerability to hunger from an entitlement perspective, which is determined by three socio-economic spheres: "market perturbations (economic exchange), coping thresholds (socioeconomics of resilience) and social security limitations (informal 'moral economies' or formal welfare institutions)." Market perturbations disproportionately affect vulnerable groups, most often the landless and those who work in informal markets or as labourers, who suffer from entitlement deprivation during commodity market fluctuations. Coping strategies, or socioeconomics of resilience, fail when endowments of land, income and social relations cannot be exchanged for food, increasing vulnerability. Social security limitations refer to the capacity of familial, social, and community support that form a kind of moral economy, which can be combined with state social security in the exchange of social entitlements.

The effects on food supply from sudden shocks, long-term trends or seasonal cycles must be responded to, by exploiting and sustaining opportunities, and contesting or resisting the changing environment. To accomplish this, the group or individual must mobilize its assets. As Moser writes, "Vulnerability is therefore closely linked to asset ownership. The more assets people have, the less vulnerable they are, and the greater the erosion of people's assets, the greater their insecurity" (1996:28). When analyzing

vulnerability one must consider not only the threat, but also the ability to transform assets into income and food to overcome food insecurity. How these assets are effectively transformed depends on intra-household and extra-household factors. Intra-household dynamics such as gender, age, births, death and marriage all play a role in a household's ability to exchange entitlements and respond to external stresses. Extra-household factors depend on the interaction between the household, and individuals within that household, with the market, community, state and institutions. An individual's capacity to respond to changes in the external environment depends on their ability to exchange assets using their social networks. This ability to exchange assets affects one's vulnerability to food shortages.

The entitlement approach allows us to understand why, that even when there is no absolute shortage of food, starvation can occur. A breakdown in entitlements exacerbates a household's vulnerability. A feminist approach, using a bargaining framework, and the concept of entitlements, can address the issue of food security from a gendered perspective.

## 2.6 Bargaining

The 'bargaining framework' first appeared when John Nash Jr. (1950) published *The Bargaining Problem*. He presented the classical economic problem of bargaining between two people as game theory, where bargaining allows for cooperation for mutual benefit (a person only cooperates when their own self-interests are furthered), or non-cooperation to meet individual self-interests. He assumed in his theory that each individual is equal in their bargaining skill. This approach was further developed by Manser and Brown (1980) when they placed household decision making within the bargaining framework and then applied two-person cooperative game theory. Their argument was that a household will try to maximize its aggregate consumption, but that within the household, individuals must decide on the allocation of the resources and the distribution of gains. Manser and Brown (1980) looked at households with more equitable dynamics as well as those with authoritarian dynamics. However, these models paid little attention to gender dynamics or extra-household bargaining. Agarwal (1997) added to the literature by exploring how social norms and social perceptions affect intra-

household and extra-household bargaining, linking the arenas of household, market, community and state in India.

Agarwal's bargaining framework has been adapted for this research. Here I study the four arenas of household, community, markets and institutions in reference to gender relations, bargaining and food security outcomes. Through these spaces, one can examine the intra-household and extra-household bargaining power within and between households that reinforce perceptions and social norms affecting women's bargaining power. Agarwal's (1997:7) bargaining framework examines the determinants of gender, which refers to "a wide range of factors [that] could define a person's bargaining power." Specifically determinants are economic assets, communal or external support systems, social norms, and perceptions about needs and contributions. This research is a qualitative, in-depth exploratory study, and thus cannot identify determinants or attribute causality, therefore 'determinants' will be replaced by the term 'factors' which refers to a partial list of reasons that facilitate or inhibit food security.

This framework provides a conceptual map of power relations between women and men in the four arenas and how these relationships impinge on the participants' food security. The relationships embody an ideology, a narrative and a material division of resources, labour, ideas and representations that ascribe to and uphold different perceptions of men and women's abilities, in effect creating different spaces for men and women with different levels of food security. The process of social construction is complex and dynamic, with both men and women constructing, resisting, contesting, negotiating and sustaining gendered roles and social norms in these spaces. It should be noted that the conceptual map is a partial and abstract representation of the relationships that work to keep men and women food insecure.

## 2.7 Feminist Theoretical Approaches, Feminist Political Ecology & Women's Work

Feminist theorists argue that individuals are situated differently from one another with regard to the structures of power, leading to differing experiences, understandings and knowledge of the world in which they live (Haraway 1988). This knowledge is partial, as perspective is conditioned by one's position. Rather than rejecting partial

knowledge as biased or incomplete, feminist theorists accept that *all* knowledge is situated and partial. As Haraway states, "Feminist objectivity means quite simply situated knowledges" (1988: 581). This study honours the situated knowledge of the participants and recognizes that the powerful systems that created change in the Haitian agri-food system along with gendered social norms do not take into account the situated knowledge of the participants, leaving the women's experience invisible. According to McDowell and Sharp (1999), feminist geographers emphasise the construction of sexual differentiation to highlight the distribution of social power and the constitution of subjectivity. This research will make visible the invisible by placing the women participants in control of the research.

According to Foucault (1977), subjectivity is the product of those who have the power to build knowledge and those who adopt those constructions. hooks (1990) adds to this theory through her critical analysis of the epistemology of contemporary mediums, including pop culture and education. Like feminist geographers McDowell and Sharp (1999), hooks considers space to be central to subjectivity, especially in resisting and adopting an alternative understandings. hooks (1990) contends that we must have the ability to resist structures of power-knowledge by the creation of 'spaces of radical openness', thus challenging the dominant discourse. In hooks' work, she posits that marginality, the space of the subordinate, is the central location for the production of a counter hegemonic discourse. This is the space where resistance is formed.

Performance is defined as the act in which "social agents *constitute* social reality through language, gesture, and all manner of symbolic social sign" (Butler 1988). Social agents may perform as objects to constitute social perceptions by repeating performances and thus solidifying a perception into a social norm, or a social agent may resist a perception or norm by choosing a subversive performance to establish identity or 'subject.' Butler (1990) uses the example of the performance of heterosexual acts which creates identity authenticity at the expense of non-heterosexual acts. Yet, even when performed, identity is never fully accomplished, which offers a potential for subversion (Butler 1990). In other words, the arena in which the performance occurs has the ability to influence the performance and the outcomes, such as the bargaining position for food.

Performances are always in a state of flux, responding to new challenges yet grounded in the historical contexts.

By building upon the feminist political ecology literature, with a focus on food security, this research explores the way in which historical and current political and economic trends influence, the gendered differences which affect urban women's food security. Specifically, the study explores how social, political, economic, and cultural factors interact with gender to affect urban women's food security in Cap Haitien. This interaction is expressed in gendered relations and in the production of new strategies for survival in the new changing political economy of Haiti. These constructs vary in form for particular social sites and subordinate groups, and have been shaped by colonial, neo-colonial, and capitalist economic and political structures in a continual process of change (Rocheleau et. al 1996).

Women are active agents in their food procurement strategies and work differently than men in three ways: women have a different knowledge base then men, women have different access to resources than men, and women have different social responses. As noted by Robbins (2004) these strategies are in no way related to biological or physiological differences between men and women, but rather are products of social and culturally constructed positions. This research adds nuances to the starkness of Robbins' statement and by demonstrating that their reproductive abilities influence their social responses to these constructed roles. The differential power distribution between men and women takes place in the household, markets, institutions and in the community and will be unpacked in Chapter Five. Studying the interaction between arenas, like those mentioned, and the consequences of that interaction is a central focus of the political ecology approach. A feminist political ecology approach illuminates the point that human-food trade environment interactions and processes are gendered. In other words, the way women and men experience food insecurity in the new Haitian agri-food system is different. Women and men often have different access to and control over resources and different roles and responsibilities. These gender differences are founded in historically constructed roles.

## 2.8 Historical Construction of Gender

To better understand the experiences and constructed roles that women in present day Haiti negotiate, resist and perform, it is necessary to examine the historical underpinnings of gender construction beginning in colonial times. *Sun, Sex, and Gold* (1999), written by Kamala Kempadoo, is a study devoted to examining the social organization of sexual labour in Caribbean history. Kempadoo contends that the construction of women in the Caribbean as sexual objects is inextricably tied to the power and control exerted by European colonizers over the bodies of female black slaves. Slave owners had complete access to not only a female slave's labour in the field and house, but total sexual access, which materialized as rape, sexual abuse, concubinage and prostitution. This opinion is shared by Hilary Beckles (1989) in his work on female slaves in Barbados. It was common practice, according to Kempadoo (1999) that European men of any class would never be without their coloured mistress. In addition to fulfilling the sexual desires of their masters, slaves were sent to towns as prostitutes for ships' crews, thus bringing in wages to the plantation. The black women's role as sexual object upheld the economic, social and political well-being of the master. Children from these interactions were not given formal recognition by fathers and were defined as either a slave or part of the free labouring class. This sexual arrangement reproduced the slave labour with children that could not make any legal demands on the master for property or inheritance. In this way the female black slave generated three forms of income: "labour, prostitution and reproduction" (Beckles 1989:144). There was status and comfort to be gained from being the master's mistress as opposed to rape or hard labour for non-compliance. In the work of Moitt (1996), he describes how female slaves would exchange sex with soldiers for bullets and gunpowder. The performance of sexual exchange in this regard reinforced the social norm of a black slave women as sexual object; however, alternatively this was a subversive performance, or a survival strategy of resistance, as the action had direct political meaning as military supplies went to support the slave revolt and freedom.

In the shadow of the extractive plantations emerged another economy based on the household. Plantation owners had allotted small plots of land for slaves to plant crops

for their own use. The self-sufficiency of the slaves effectively subsidized the cost of production of the plantations by augmenting the meagre food provisions supplied to feed the workers. Yet, the slaves saw beyond this opportunity and produced and sold into local food markets (Schwartz 2009; Mintz 1974; Mintz 1986). The development of the subsistence economy grew post-independence. Through government land reform programs, share-cropping, squatting and purchasing land the local market system expanded, and household food production became an important source of food and income. Rural Haitian women contributed significantly to production and marketing of Haiti's internal food trade economy (N'Zengou-Tayo 1998), and their performance in the space of the household and the food trade sector has sustained the construction of these feminized spaces. After emancipation, the roles of women as marketers, domestic servants and sexual objects persisted.

In present day rural Haiti women's roles include reproduction of the household, farming, and marketing in the internal food trade sector (N'zengou-Tayo 1998). The feminised space of marketing food is an integral part of the rural Haitian family structure. Rural women are responsible for harvesting and marketing the farm produce of their husband's agricultural plots, and this joint union of efforts has been described as a Haitian farm business model by a local agronomist (I 27: May30)[9]. There are no reasonable employment opportunities other than this informal market in rural Haiti. In this rural business model, women gain and keep control of the family finances (N'zengou-Tayo 1998).

The political and economic changes in Haiti over the last few decades have created an unreliable, volatile food system. Created by the influx of cheap food imports and a lack of national and local state agricultural support, the new food supply is easily upset by flooding, hurricanes, earthquakes, political upheavals, and global price spikes. Rural families have seen their incomes fall, and have had to balance their meagre income between food needs, taxes, school fees, medical needs, and other expenses. During life events, such as a funeral or illness, land and livestock are sold to meet family needs,

[9] For a full list of interviewee data including interview dates, importance to this research and pseudonym see Appendix 8.

resulting in a complete exhaustion of the family's investments and a new level of desperation. To avoid long term food insecurity, the preservation of assets may take precedence over short term food needs, for example saving seeds for planting, or designating money to purchase inputs (Baro 2002). However, political turmoil, economic disruptions and environmental degradation have further undermined food security (Baro 2002), and the changes in the agri-food system have reduced rural incomes to the point where families are no longer able to meet their basic needs. In this shifting political economy families are forced to sell or abandon their land and migrate to urban centres in search of new livelihoods.

To maintain the space of household and food trade sector, women need to access men's assets, consisting of agricultural labour and land (N'zengou-Tayo 1998; and Lowenthal 1987). T. Schwartz has explained that men and women can inherit land equally and women who have money buy land. Women work in gardens when a man is absent or may hire workers. However, because sons are more involved in garden work than daughters their fathers tend to sell land to their sons. Daughters and sons who are away often get left out of land tenure arrangements. The other issue is that both young women and young men have restricted access to garden land. Middle and older aged males who take greatest interest in gardens tend to monopolize the land, and often the best way to obtain access to land is through a reproductive liaison with an older man. Furthermore, women need the men to work the gardens while they begin their reproductive and then marketing careers, which depends on the availability of child labour. A married woman can thus rely on a man for his financial support and labour while she begins her reproductive and commerce activities (personal communication, October, 2010). According to Schwartz (2009), rural Haitian women use their bodies to access economically successful men, with the promise of reproducing a family for farm labour and old age security. Their bodies are socially and culturally constructed as a site of reproduction of the household, through physically reproducing children and through their labour of selling garden produce to realize the family income.

Women who are not able to access land, do not have access to male labour, and are not successful in commerce activities may need to perform the role of sexual object.

This commodification of the female body requires a type of sexual-material exchange used for negotiation called "gendered capital" by Richman in her study of Haitian women (2003:123). Specifically, Richmond refers to purposeful use of 'gendered capital' as the selling of the symbolic piece of 'land' between a woman's legs, also called 'money' (lajan) or 'mother money' (manman lajan) for male material support. Due to the lack of economic development or education and the societal structures in which they live, few economic choices exist for women in rural setting but to perform this role of inserting their bodies into this constructed informal economy. According to Schwartz (2009), rural women consider their sexuality as an economic asset. Women's bodies in this arrangement are constructed as sites of exploitation to capture men's wealth through marriage and the production of children and as sites of accumulation of household cash through the labour of marketing farm products in the informal market.

Women who exit the rural communities are left looking for new income opportunities to compensate for the lost traditional strategies of marriage and household reproduction. These women use migration to the city and employment in the informal market as commerce women as a survival strategy. Women also adopt dangerous social habits of sexual acquiescence to men to compensate for the household receiving less male support for the reproduction of the family. In Haiti women often seek out relationships with men, whether with a husband, lover, friend or brief encounter, which allow them to access money, material items such as phone cards, food, clothes, or other commodities. As suggested by Davis (2006) with regards to urban slums, short term survival strategies adopted in a new political economy could ultimately impede long–term social mobility, as it makes extensive use of labour for basic survival. Certainly, changes in the Haitian agri-food system and economy disturbed a difficult but relatively stable rural life and, as will be demonstrated in this study, replaced it with an urban sex-for-food economy.

Haitian culture supports the 'sex for food economy' by celebrating women's fertility, ridiculing the childless,[10] and rejecting the use of contraceptives. Urban women

[10] From Schwartz (2008:47-48), "Childless people, especially women, are pitied, even criticized as *millet* (mules), and sometimes suspected of being *lougawou* (witches) or having sold their unborn children to demons (*li te manje yo*)."

have a high fertility rate of almost five children per woman, with forty three percent of urban households headed by single women, and eighty five percent of these households earning around $1 US per day (Clarke 2004)[11]. The 'sexual-moral economy' substitutes for the stable male bread winner. "People who have not yet borne children are considered children themselves, no matter what their age. Not to have children at all is a far greater shame than having children outside of a union or with someone who is considered disreputable" (Schwartz 2009:48). This commodity exchange, or sexual capital, can at any time be depicted as prostitution to humiliate a women (Richman 2003), but is more commonly considered acceptable behavior that is encouraged because it is a woman's right to use her body in this manner or as noted by Schwartz (2009:59), "Getting by is not a sin (*degaje se pa pech*)." If unable to fulfill this role the man may be depicted as a sexual loser, or his wife may disrespect him by taking new partners to secure the wealth to run the household (Lowenthal 1987:132).

Aside from the sexual construction of their roles, women are also considered commerce women. Commerce refers to the selling of handicrafts, local food, and imported foods such as rice and wheat in the countryside. In the city, commerce activities shift slightly with fewer handicrafts and much more imported food, clothing, household cleaning products and personal hygiene items, as well as electronics (see Chapter Four). For Haitian women status is gained through marriage, childbearing, and successful commerce activities. Women who do not partake in commerce activities to support the household income are considered lazy (N'Zengou-Tayo 1998). N'Zengou-Tayo (1998:124) explains, "Women are entirely responsible for the household economy, organizing the family, raising the children, working in the fields and gardens; and 90 per cent are involved in some form of commercial enterprise." Women are the centre of the internal food trade economy including distribution, marketplaces, retailing, and price setting. It is all women's business, and it is an integral part of the Haitian family structure.

[11] UNIFEM DATA collected in 2001.

## 2.9 Summary

Urban women in Cap Haitien are embedded in a global economic structure in which unequal trade and economic relations have eroded the Haitian internal food trade system, upsetting rural agricultural communities and the family farm business model, thereby increasing rural-urban migration, unemployment and food insecurity. Feminist political ecology is an appropriate theoretical approach to analyze these changes, while the concepts of food security, entitlements, vulnerability, and performance may be employed to explain the effects upon, and responses by, the women participants in Cap Haitien. In the next chapter I will describe the methodology deployed to conduct this research study and to elucidate the voices of the women into the research.

# Chapter Three

# Theoretical Framework, Research Methods and Study Design

## 3.1 Introduction

This exploratory study took place in Cap Haitien, Haiti with thirty women who volunteered to research their own food insecurity. To conduct participatory research within a feminist political ecology framework, a methodology was selected that was grounded in theories concerning power relations and positionality and designed to move the respondent from the position of passive research objects to active researcher subjects. This chapter outlines how the methodological design attempted to mitigate the uneven power imbalances within the research process to understand in greater depth the issues of food security from local urban Haitian women's perspectives.

In this chapter I briefly revisit the epistemological and ontological foundations of feminist political ecology and describe the Participatory Action Research (PAR) methodological framework specific to this applied exploratory study. Next I discuss the complementary qualitative research tools deployed (semi-structured interviews, focus groups, and participant observation). Finally, I will describe the criteria for participant selection and sampling strategy, ethical issues, validity, limitations, and the methods used for data analysis. First though, I will discuss the research objectives.

### 3.1.1 Research Questions

The purpose of this research was to facilitate PAR exercises to aid the participants in to critically reflecting upon their own food insecurity. Through these exercises we explored how social and spatial factors influenced the food security of participants. The women were not passive in this research, but were active participants. Recorded in the Focus Group Discussion section are the four research questions which the women developed to support an investigation into their food insecurity. While facilitating the participants' research project I was able to consider the attributes and outcomes of their discussions, augmented by semi-structured interviews to examine my own four research objectives:

1. To examine different food sources that urban women access in urban Cap Haitien
2. To explore critical social and spatial relations that affect women's food security in urban Haiti
3. To examine how urban women negotiate social and spatial inequalities
4. To determine the constraints women might face (social and spatial) in using urban agriculture to improve their food security

To achieve these objectives, PAR with the necessary qualitative methods were employed all within a feminist political ecological framework.

### 3.2 Feminist Political Ecology as an Epistemological Approach

I have taken a feminist political ecology approach to examining urban women's challenges in procuring food to meet their households' needs. As elucidated in the previous chapter, this study of political ecology recognizes that urban women's changing position in the Haitian food system is not just due to market failures or poor policy making, but rather it is a result of broader political and economic forces associated with neo-liberalism. These forces have spatial and temporal impacts on both people and the environment and are characterized by highly unequal power relationships between regional geographical areas and global political and economic processes. Domestic and international political economic pressures limit women's livelihood options, forcing them into specific income generating and food collection activities to meet their household food needs.

Central to feminist political ecology is the examination of how social categories such as gender, class, ethnicity and age interact with ecological processes and political-economic systems (Rocheleau et al. 1996). Economic shifts are borne unequally between individuals and communities and exacerbate existing social and economic inequalities. Policies made by elite power structures heighten food insecurity in Haiti. Yet, this situation could be averted if policy makers could hear and prioritize the voices and experiences of the marginalized to understand the complexity and ramifications of such actions.

Feminist theory draws on the concept of situated knowledge, to emphasize that there are multiple social worlds, with competing social meanings, that one knows and understands the world through his or her lived experience, and thus knowledge is always situated and partial (Haraway 1988). Haraway (1991) contended, because knowledge is created from a specific vantage point it becomes an individual's 'situated knowledge'. It is this situated knowledge which this research project will ask the participants to examine. Feminist approaches to social research emphasize the implications of the relative positions of the researcher to the participant and the power dynamics of that relationship (Gregory et al. 2009; Aitken 2006). To develop this idea I refer to Haraway (1991: 198) who contends that "the object of knowledge be pictured as an actor or agent," informing the epistemological approach of the relationship between the researcher and the participant.

Political ecology was first linked with feminism by Rocheleau, Thomas-Slayter and Wangari (1996), as they drew from political ecology, cultural ecology and feminist geography to explore structures and processes of social change. Central to feminist political ecology is the examination of the gendered experiences in differing livelihoods, environmental problems, political and economic change. This research utilized feminist political ecology to explore the changing Haitian food system, the uneven access to, distribution, and control of, food resources and to examine how the urban women participants respond to those changes while bargaining for food in social and spatial spheres. By drawing on all of these approaches, I attempted to address the power issues in my research and move the participants from the position of object to subject to become volunteer researchers in the exploration of their own food security.

Contrary to this research approach is positivism, a philosophical approach to data collection that posits that scientific knowledge is the only authentic knowledge and denies the validity of the metaphysical (Kitchen 2006). There are flaws to this approach when we consider that facts and data are actually embedded in values and judgements, and held within the larger production of knowledge and power (Gregory et. al 2009). Thus, there is an ontological tension between positivism and a feminist approach to PAR, as PAR works to empower participants rather than exploit and extract data from the

participants. Feminist PAR is more suitable for this study because it attempts to transform these powers into identifiable problems by enabling the participants to become the researchers, to analyze and code the data, and determine the outcomes of the process. This process allowed for a more ethical transparency.

### 3.2.1 Participatory Action Research

The critical philosophical grounding of PAR arose from the works of Brazilian educator Paulo Freire who stated, "participatory methods have an emphasis on co-learning and action based on critical reflection," (Minkler 2000:191). Practitioners of PAR advocate work alongside marginalized groups to raise the voices of the marginalized and guide them through self-evaluation, analysis and identification of action items. This process allows them to challenge and strengthen their capacity to address problems (Kesby 2000). PAR is a term referring to a variety of participatory approaches to action-oriented research where the researcher and the participants collaborate to examine a problem or issue with the objective of developing an appropriate response (Kindon 2007), and is different from conventional qualitative methods as it gives voice and agency to those who have a stake in the issue to change their view of the world through critical thinking. In this study I followed a feminist epistemological approach, drawing on Freire's ideas by placing the participants in control of the process as researchers, to not only co-learn, but to become reflexive subjects to produce meaningful results to their lives, and to elucidate their voices into the research. In this approach I examined the gendered inequalities that may shape, enable and constrain their lives.

Traditional qualitative research can be described as having a colonizing effect, with the researcher developing the research objectives, collecting data, drawing conclusions, and disseminating results, leaving the participants' voices marginalized. The PAR approach attempts to give participants control of the process, to a much greater extent than other research methods, and as such is political in nature. PAR offers us a methodological framework in which to engage people into action and improve their lives through research. When utilized with gender in mind, PAR can help women recognize their problems as collective and social in nature, leading to healthy self-empowerment (Maguire 1987). As stated by Pain et al. (2003: 46):

> The defining characteristic of participatory research is not so much the methods and techniques employed, but the degree of engagement of participants within and beyond the research encounter. Participatory approaches did not originate as a methodology for research, but as a process by which communities can work towards change.

Kothari (2001) argues that practitioners of PAR see knowledge as a "fixed commodity" when really "knowledge is culturally, socially and politically reformulated as a powerful normative construct," so "participatory approaches can unearth who gets what, when and where, but not necessarily the processes by which this happens...[referring to the] wider power relations in society" (2001:141). This research study answers this critique with a project design chosen to allow for an examination of how power structures within the political economy of Haiti's food economy interact with gender, class and age.

A PAR approach aids in the recognition that power relations exist not only between the researcher and the participants, but also between the participants themselves. This research design addressed this concern in four ways. Firstly, I demonstrate my commitment to levelling power in part by the choice of terminology with 'participant' replacing 'respondent' and 'informant.' This semantic shift signals a shift in power and highlights the focus on ensuring the agency of those participants who conducted the research. It is this degree of participant engagement that defines PAR and distances it from other methodologies and approaches (Whyte 1991; Chambers 1997). Secondly, focus group discussions were organized to place more timid women together, in order to ensure a higher level of participation from these individuals and making space for hearing perspectives that would otherwise be missed. Within these groups a spokesperson was selected by the group and altered each meeting day. These spokeswomen would utilize the blackboard and lead our group in discussions. This shift allowed each woman to experience a leadership role and helped to level power dimensions within the group. Thirdly, the participants set the research objectives. These objectives differed from objectives of this Master of Arts thesis and focused upon their own concerns and goals (see Chapter Five). Finally, the participants, on their own initiative, and based on previous experience forming work groups, set out the code of conduct to be followed

during our meetings, which included speaking to each other with respect, arriving on time, checking each other's well-being, and being supportive regardless of differences. This is a well worn tool that Haitians implement, and most likely a result of years of NGO intervention. These principals were observed in practice during our time together. All power dynamics within a group can never be fully addressed, but these guidelines were designed to facilitate equal time, respect, and voice for each participant.

Minkler (2000) argues that PAR can engage community members and researchers in a joint process in which both contribute equally to a co-learning process in order to build local community capacity. Participants are empowered to increase control over their lives by nurturing community strengths and problem-solving abilities (2000:191). The process allows for the realization of individual or community priorities, rather than those of outside experts. There is no one recipe for 'doing' community-based PAR, like other qualitative methods, the researcher's work is location and participant specific. Furthermore, as elucidated by Cleaver (1999), PAR needs to consider "not just rethinking the relationship between differently placed individuals and historically and spatially specific social structures, but also the role of individuals, households, communities, development agencies and the state" (1999:608). This study, with a feminist political ecology approach, answers this call for consideration of the specific context in which the participants live.

This research benefitted from the Haitian cultural practice of working together as organizations or '*konbits*'.[12] However, Cooke (2001) suggests that groups will make riskier decisions than they would take as individuals. He proposes that a group decision blurs individual responsibility and that PAR encourages risky decision making. In contrast to Cooke's concerns, in this study it was the safety of the group that allowed the women to take 'healthy' risks and challenge gendered social norms.

Kothari asserts that "participants and participatory development practitioners are themselves conduits of power" (2001:142). This was a concern in this study, not because of the PAR methodology, but because of my role as Canadian Director at the Centre. The

[12] Konbits are groups of individual people in Haiti, with or without familiar connections, that come together to share work and the benefits of that work.

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research occurred within Rayjon Sharecare's Urban Community Project, a non-government project in which I held the volunteer role as Canadian Director (further explanation shortly). Initially the women considered me leader of their group. It is a common experience in Haiti that foreigners will supply monetary resources and this expectation was reinforced by my 'official' role. My leadership would indicate a need to ensure the project was well sponsored with material and monetary needs. Persistent dialogue was needed to dampen this expectation and reinforce the agreed upon goal of answering the research objectives. Kothari suggests that "participation demands certain kinds of performances to be enacted" (2001:142), to meet expectations. A performance with the hopes of receiving monetary goods appeared to be eventually replaced with a desire to achieve a successful research project. However, as discussed in Chapter Five and Six the research design was flawed and the PAR approach was never fully realized. Specifically, the flaws included my position as a white, foreign researcher and Canadian Director of the Centre, and the lack of recognition that participation in the research project was employed as a survival strategy.

Kothari (2001) suggests that translators could manifest power within the working group, and this power dynamic was an issue within this project. Two translators, one male and one female, were hired and then released due to class issues which materialized in poor attitudes toward the participants. The third translator worked with equality and respect toward the participants. In fact a supportive relationship of friendship grew between him and the women, which continued past the end of the working group. On occasion the translator could not articulate cultural nuances and he would rely upon the women to create the explanation. It was these moments when the women were teachers that helped reduce the power imbalance. Hailey (2001) captures this critique of PAR when he describes it as a formulaic approach which overlooks the significance of respect, trust and friendship to reach success. I cannot speak for other PAR experiences, however, within this study respect, humility and friendship were sought and achieved as the bases of our interaction.

This feminist epistemological approach requires research methods that are critical of the unequal power relationship between the researcher and the researched. Feminist

PAR is an inductive approach that creates space for previously marginalized knowledge, including knowledge that emerges from the experiences of women and the poor to become the core focus of the research. The objective is not solely to produce knowledge that benefits the completion of my Master of Arts thesis, but to create knowledge that benefits the participants and integrates their ideas into theories. To achieve these ends grounded theory was invoked to analyse data as it emerged throughout the study.

### 3.2.2 Grounded Theory

Grounded theory is an inductive approach which uses data to develop theory (Charmaz 2004). It emerged from a critique of the artificial division between the data collection and analysis phases of research (Glaser and Strauss 1967). Grounded theory involves developing categories during the course of data collection by recording the knowledge of the participants (Bringer, Johnston and Brachenridge 2006). Analytical codes and categories are developed from the recorded response of the participants, followed by the development of mid-range theories to explain processes and memos to 'fill out' the categories (Charmaz 2004). Grounded theory helped to ensure that the participants in this study dictated the direction of the research and subsequent development of its conclusions. This mode of knowledge production follows a feminist standpoint epistemology.

## 3.3 Study Design and Sampling Strategy

### 3.3.1 Study Design

The study site was situated in Cap Haitien, Haiti at Rayjon Sharecare's Urban Community Project (UCP), a Haitian/Canadian development initiative. Rayjon Sharecare is a non-profit organization that financially supports the UCP and funded this research project. Rayjon has worked in Haiti since 1986, offering development initiatives in education, village banking and nutrition in the St. Marc region. Among other things, the UCP offered medical treatment to malnourished children, a small micro-credit program, literacy and business training. The Director of the Centre was a Catholic Sister who oversaw a staff of thirteen Haitians. The Centre was designed to operate in partnership with myself as volunteer Canadian Director of the Centre. This dynamic played a

powerful role that was recognized, yet underestimated during the design and practice of the study. Unforeseen consequences of my relationship with the Sister eventually undermined the project and are discussed in Chapter Six.

This exploratory case study was built upon previous participatory field work in 2006 and 2008 with the women that attend programs offered at the Centre. During this work, food security was determined to be a priority concern by the women participants. From these former participants a number of volunteers came forward to participate as researchers to investigate their food security. Volunteers attended an information session where the objective of the study and the time commitment involved were explained. They were also informed that there would be no monetary reward for their participation. Of the thirty women that volunteered, only one ended her participation prematurely, stating illness as the reason.

### 3.3.2 Participant Selection and Sampling Strategy

The purposeful sampling strategy was aimed at recruiting urban women from Rayjon's UCP. Purposeful sampling allows for an understanding of variation in the phenomena of interest (Maxwell 1992), which in this study is the experience of food security for urban women in Cap Haitien, Haiti. As indicated earlier these women were familiar to me and had previously indicated their concern over their food security in participatory workshops that took place from 2006-2008. Many had children enrolled in the Centre`s nutrition program. Interviews were also held with other informants from the community, such as agronomists, farmers, Association Femmes Soleil d'Haiti (AFASDA), staff from Human Rights Watch, and market women. Since this study used non-probability sampling methods and targeted a specific group of women, the results cannot be generalized to represent the larger population, nor are the findings applicable to other places.

An initial information meeting was held where the issue of food security was reviewed for sustained importance alongside an explanation of the research study and PAR. Other topics included privacy, confidentiality, rules of conduct, free and informed consent and the right to withdraw participation at any time, as well as the benefits and

risks of the project. Emphasis was placed on the epistemological approach which allowed the women to become 'owners' of the research process. The research project was designed to meet their goals, to create opportunities to collect data and analyze data, and to create outcomes that would benefit the participants. At the closing of the information meeting thirty urban women volunteered to work as participants and investigate their own food security. A small sample size was necessary due to the intensity of PAR methodology.

## 3.4 Ethical Concerns

The ethical approach of PAR lends itself nicely to this research application, as it has the goal of replacing knowledge generated from privileged places with the production of new knowledge gained through critical reflection of the participants. This perspective addresses the reality that both the participants and the researcher come together with their own situated knowledge, and allows the researcher an opportunity to reflect upon the situated knowledge of the participants, and generate research that more closely represents these differing perspectives.

The data generated from this study achieved two ends: firstly, it encouraged the women participants to think critically about their food security and in order to find solutions to address their struggle; secondly, it generated new knowledge about the social and spatial spaces and bargaining relations of these urban women researchers and the question of whether urban agriculture would alleviate their food insecurity. The latter, if viewed independently would be viewed as extractive. However, the objective of this research was to allow the women to analyze their own food insecurity, a topic they had self-identified in previous workshops. The Master of Arts thesis was the route chosen by this researcher to aid the women and facilitate the process.

### 3.4.1 Confidentiality

Ethics approval was obtained via a rigorous application process through the University of Western Ontario's Research Ethics Board of non-medical research involving human subjects (Appendix I). All possible steps were taken to ensure the participants' confidentiality was protected. The privacy of the subjects was protected by

referencing the respondents' names to a number coding system. The coded number was used in lieu of the participants' names in any data records, reports, presentations, or final documents that ensued from the study. A record of the name-number associations are kept in files, stored in a separate secure location and have not, and will not, be disclosed to anyone. Translators were carefully briefed of ethical procedures used to protect people's confidentiality and privacy.

### 3.4.2 Informed Consent

An informed consent form was translated into Creole (see Appendix II – English; Appendix III - Creole), read to, discussed, and signed by each participant prior to each of the semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions. Steps were taken prior to the interview and intermittently through the focus groups to ensure that each participant understood that they could at any time halt their participation and exit from the research. During the interview process each woman was informed that her responses would be coded and kept confidential and that they had the right to refuse to respond to any questions. The translators were also required to sign a confidentiality agreement (Appendix IV).

### 3.4.3 Risk to Participants and Researcher

Due to the political nature of Haiti and the severity of poverty, certain to the researcher and the participants were inherent in this study. Overnight stays or prolonged visits in the shanty towns were not possible, reducing the length of time available for participant observation. Financial risks also occurred, as participants had to forgo income generating activities in order to attend our meetings. In an attempt to mitigate these concerns, meetings were kept short (usually two hours, but occasionally three hours), occurred only two and occasionally three times per week over a six week period, and attendance was not mandatory. It was hoped that these negative impacts were outweighed by the positive impact from involvement in this research project. During two full day events food was provided. In addition transportation was provided for excursions.

## 3.5 Data Collection Methods and Qualitative Tools

### 3.5.1 In-Depth Semi-Structured Interviews (SSI)

I conducted twenty semi-structured interviews, approximately one and a half hours in length, with the participants, in order to explore food security, coping strategies, and ideas about urban gardening. Structured interviews leave the researcher in the position of power by delivering structured questions with little deviation from script. As noted by Miller and Crabtree (2004) the structured interview arrangement actually "runs the high risk of phrasing the researcher's own concerns into the mouths of the respondents" and silencing the voice of the participant. In contrast, the in-depth semi-structured interview is a qualitative approach that create a "listening space" where dialogue and an exchange of views allow for the construction of meaning for the purpose of scientific research (Miller and Crabtree 2004), and although they lack breadth (Patton 1990), they increase the validity of data collected because of their in-depth nature. With the creation of the listening space it can be asserted that semi-structured interviews are a qualitative method which can follow the epistemological framework outlined in feminist PAR. It should be noted that the semi-structured interview begins with a hierarchical relationship but aims to disarm this power dynamic by allowing the participant to control the direction of the interview through conversation. During the study, dialogue was built between the participant, the translator and myself as the questions meandered down paths that interested all three of us and which the participant felt comfortable discussing. These narratives were rich in details that would not have been revealed in a structured interview.

The open-ended interview questions were designed to invoke conversation and provide more in-depth answers. Two pilot interviews were performed, and the questions were adjusted to ensure that data gathered informed the research questions. The interviews were conducted at the Centre in a private office, with both the translator and myself recording the responses in English directly into a word processor. Initially the interviews were recorded but the recording quality was poor the practice and was discontinued. I wrote memos in English after each interview to record impressions and points that needed further exploration. The women from the research group volunteered to be interviewed, and I continued doing interviews until theoretical saturation about the

research topics had been reached. As indicated by Strauss and Corbin (1998) saturation occurs when no new data emerges to answer the research objective or categories, the categories show an adequate variation of attributes and breadth of characteristics and the relationship between the categories has been satisfactorily explored. From the semi-structured interviews, the codes, categories, patterns and themes that formed the basis for my analysis were identified. This preliminary analysis aided in identifying different networks relied upon for food access, sources of food, perceptions of food insecurity, and the challenges the participants faced while accessing food. These findings were used to design focus group activities to further examine the research topic.

### 3.5.2 Participant Observation

I carried out participant observation, which entailed becoming actively engaged in the lives of the participants by taking part in daily chores, income generating activities, and food collection. Participant observation allows for deeper insight into the daily routines, interactions between people, non-verbal behaviour, barriers, and strategies that may not get reported during interviews and focus group sessions. Participating in the process under study allows researchers to gain intimate knowledge of the participants and their habits (Gregory et al 2009). Being involved in the participants' space and place, where daily routines occur, allowed me to begin to cross from "estrangement to immersion," a self-conscious choice which allows for the critical analysis of situated knowledge (Gregory et al. 2009). This participation increased both my awareness of the participants' situated knowledge and the study's validity.

Due to the security situation in Haiti, living with the women to observe their daily routines was not feasible. In the safer neighbourhoods I chose to visit with five of the women individually. On advice of my translator and the women the more crowded slums were completed as group visits involving two, three and five participants. In total I was able to visit 15 homes of the thirty women in the group. We talked about their daily labour and food collection routines, places of importance in their communities, water and food sources, and observing existing urban gardens. The visits lasted from 4 hours to 6 hours, in which time I gained a greater appreciation for the physical labour involved in daily living, the substandard living arrangements, and some of the physical threats that

affected their ability to procure food. The limitations of my participant observation were threefold. Firstly, I was only able to execute participant observation during the security of day light hours, so I missed the morning rituals of water collection and what daily food consumption patterns may entail, thus I had to rely upon the interview data for this information. I also failed to see the night time activity. In many neighbourhoods Haitians spend time in the evening cooking and selling fried foods to neighbours. I missed observing neighbour interaction, what kind of people lived in the neighbourhoods, how the women participated in the night time activities, and whether security issues increased. Secondly, I completed only short-term, limited participant observations during good weather and as such I missed experiencing flooding, the flushing of the garbage through the steep streets and open sewers, leaking roofs, and the hazard of dirt, mud and dampness, as well as knowledge drawn from longer in-depth observations and conversations over a longer period of time. Thirdly, my 'blan'[13] status occasionally drew unwanted attention which discouraged long stays in neighbourhoods. Rather we generally kept moving from location to location to avoid attention and in this sense I missed the day to day nuances and struggles. Despite these limitations a greater appreciation for the daily hardships was gained. These observations aided in understanding some of the women's critical social and spatial issues related to food and what negotiation skills the women used on a daily basis to access food.

### 3.5.3 Focus Group Discussions

Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) are a qualitative method which employs group discussions organized around themes relevant to the research objectives. The purpose of the FGDs was to gather qualitative data of the participants' experiences and opinions, to facilitate a critical thinking process with the participants, and to pose and answer self-determined research questions. According to Gregory et al (2009) focus group discussions will generate a richer conversation and new ideas, and enable the researcher to observe interaction between the participants, such as how a group generates ideas and expresses contradictory opinions. This format also gives the researcher the opportunity to

[13] 'Blan' is Creole for foreigner, and not a distinction of skin color. Depending on the inflection of the voice it can be a derogatory statement mired in political meaning, however usually it is just a statement of fact that the person is from a country other than Haiti.

question the participants about conflicting data (Morgan 2004). The focus groups employed qualitative tools, such as mapping, small group discussion, and interviewing one another then amalgamating the responses, until saturation of theoretical concepts was achieved for the topic of interest.

Focus groups helped to reveal the different constraints the women face when accessing food. The data in this study was ranked according to optimal and problematic ways of securing food temporally and spatially. I used an inductive grounded theoretical strategy, in which I simultaneously collected and analysed data around emerging themes with the participants. This technique allowed for the development of relevant categories to the research question and avoided preconceived theories (Charmaz 2004; Patton 1990).

In the initial focus group the preliminary data from the semi-structured interviews was presented. Once this task was completed, and during focus group discussions (FGDs) which are explained in greater detail in Chapter Five, the participants generated their own participants' objectives:

1. *Kouman ou fe pou komite a fa? (Kouman w fe yon kominite?)* How do you make a community?
2. *Kote nou jwen manje?* Where do we get our food?
3. *Kouman nou ka depanse mwens kob sou manje?* How can we spend less money on food?
4. *Kouman pou nou fe pou nou jwen yon solisyon sou kondisyon manje?* How are we going to make a solution to obtain food?

During successive FGDs qualitative data was generated in relation to the participant's experiences and opinions in order to answer the four research questions. Limitations of FGDs include the possibility of quieter participants not expressing themselves in the presence of more dominant women. FGDs usually consists of six to twelve people, thus due to our group size of thirty, we often broke into smaller groups in which the women would discuss the topics together, followed by large group discussion to collect the responses. Notes were only taken when the small groups presented their ideas, adding the limitation that I was not able to hear all the ideas discussed, and

acknowledging that some ideas would likely be filtered out prior to presentation. Extra effort was taken by myself and the translator to alternate groups from time to time and to group quieter people together. Ground rules were set to ensure a respectful non-judgmental exchange of ideas and perspectives. Discussions were captured by symbols and words on a black board, memo notes in Creole by the group secretary, and in English for use in my MA research as well as reference to support future FGDs.

A second limitation as expressed by Morgan (2004) is that the facilitator may disrupt the group discussion by attempting to guide the group. As facilitator, and with the feminist PAR objective, I was very sensitive to this issue and respectfully offered examples only if the conversation stalled to avoid swaying the discussion. Furthermore, I tried to offer examples from a Canadian context, which they would not be able to adopt as their responses, but would serve as an example to help stimulate the thinking process. Having a set of research objectives independent of the participants meant it was important to ensure FGD topics stayed focused to meet the participants' objective, rather than be influenced by my own agenda. This issue is discussed further in the Limitations to Study Design section in this chapter.

A third limitation is the discussion of sensitive topics. Morgan (2004) stated that some topics may be unacceptable for discussion. Sensitive subjects in this study occurred within the semi-structured interviews. However, abuse and rape were also covered by our guest speakers, but not discussed in the group settings. Finally, due to the restricted field time I was never able to shed the role of facilitator and allow the women to fully direct their own FGDs. This step would have increased the participatory nature of the research project. The women did set their own research objectives, collect data, and write memos, but the qualitative tools to facilitate the extraction of data and the analysis of the said data came from the primary researcher.

### 3.6 Validity

The chosen methods increased validity. As stated by Brinberg and McGrath (1985:151): "Validity is not a commodity that can be purchased with techniques...Rather validity is like integrity, character, and quality, to be assessed relative to purposes and

circumstances" (Restated in Maxwell 1992:280-1). This integrity was instilled within the research study by choosing a methodology that repositioned participants from objects of research to subjects. PAR and the associated qualitative methods allowed the participants to describe their daily lives and collect data to represent themselves. The data revealed spatial and temporal inequalities of women's lives. As Maxwell (1992:283) contends, validity pertains to the relationship between the account of an experience and whether the experience is "constructed as objective reality, the constructions of actors, or a variety of other possible interpretations." This approach does not assume that there is one correct reality, as there are many equally valid accounts from different perspectives by each of the women in the group. However, I would argue that the women do share similar experiences that typify their experience as a group as compared to other socio-economic groups in Cap Haitien and elsewhere.

Validity is lost in the power relationship between the researcher and the participant described earlier. Since a 'blan', or foreigner is viewed as wealthy, and with ability to aid, women appeared to be exaggerating their suffering by, for instance, reporting an absence of any food intake for weeks – perhaps with the hope of receiving support. More subtle misrepresentations would not have been noticed and were thus likely included in the data, reducing its validity. Some sensitive issues concerning humiliation and sexuality were difficult subjects, with the latter being spoken about in the third person and leaving the impression that personal information was not always divulged. Validity was also lost in my inability to record the annual price fluctuations of food or actual consumption of food, through participant observation working through a translator who would not always be aware of the subtleties and nuances that were important to the research, and my inability to observe all the dynamics of bargaining in the four arenas discussed in Chapter Five and Six.

Methods were purposefully chosen to increase the *interpretive validity* of the data, which Maxwell (1992:288) describes as "what these objects, events, and behaviours *mean* to the people engaged in and with them." The interpretive validity is also captured in the distinction between emic categories, or those that emerge from the field, and etic categories, which emerge from the outsider's knowledge; interpretive validity relates to

the privileging of emic knowledge. The interpretative accounts were grounded in the participants' language and the participants' perspectives were central to the elucidation of the data.

Validity increased with a study design that asks for purposeful sampling of a specific group of women that affected by the specific issue of food insecurity. This epistemology maximized the interest of the participants and thus increased the relevancy of the outcomes, but is not generalizable to the greater population (Stringer 2007; Maxwell 1992). Qualitative researchers seek to understand participants' experience, knowledge, ideas and proposed solutions to a given problem rather than obtaining findings that are generalizable to the wider population (Bryman and Teevan 2005). Another way that validity is increased is through the triangulation of qualitative methods (semi-structured interview, participant observation and focus group work) which provides stronger evidence of the validity of the findings.

By clarifying what is observed from the standpoint of the marginalized, I have attempted to achieve several goals: increasing rigour; locating assumed differences between the subject and object; increasing reflexivity; and exposing distortions described by dominant narratives (Moss 1995:444). In this instance the research may have replicated and reinforced the gendered construction of identity and power, failing to reach the roots of the political agenda. Feminism and PAR were chosen as a methodological approach to address the position of power of the researcher and researched. Some qualitative researchers claim that recognizing themselves as a 'positioned subject' and actively reflecting on how they relate to the participants adds reflexivity[14] and rigour (Baxter and Eyles 1997). However, for the purposes of this study I combined self-identification of my position of power with an epistemological approach that would attempt to facilitate the transfer of power to the hands of the participants. PAR allows objectivity to be moved from the focus of concern by placing the subjectivity of the marginalized at the centre of the dialogue. With the participants becoming active subjects in the data collection the weight of necessary objectivity borne by the research decreases,

[14] Reflexivity refers to "the conditions through which research is produced, disseminated and received. Emphasis on reflexivity often accompanies discussion of positionality" (Gregory et al 2009:627).

by decreasing the false dualism of the subject/object dichotomy which holds the researcher as knowing, or the researcher as a neutral party. Rather, this research approach attempted to utilizes methodologies that rely upon reciprocity within the research relationship, thus acknowledging and subverting what feminists, such as Harding, identify as a standpoint of the dominant position of the researcher (Harding 2004; Hesse-Biber and Leavy 2004).

### 3.7 Data Analysis

This study was grounded in a feminist approach to ensure reflexivity. The key objective was to have the experience of the participants emerge from the data (Baxter and Eyles 1997; Katz 1991). Grounded theory, which Charmaz (2004) characterizes as an inductive approach, was employed to simultaneously collect and analyze data around emerging themes with the participants. Two sets of research questions existed, those of the primary researcher and those identified by the participants. This strategy had the advantage of developing emic categories relevant to both question sets. It also attempted to avoid preconceived etic theories, and allowed for subsequent inclusion of categories into mapping exercises, focus groups and participant observation. Attention was also given to the embodiment and practices the women displayed during participant observation.

When the participants and I analysed the data collected from the interviews, abstract ideas emerged as the data was coded and categorized. I wrote memos to facilitate the process until the women identified a secretary to represent them. Memo writing aided the process, as we began to explore rather than just sort the data. The interview data was closely examined for patterns and themes that generated the research question and objectives for the participants, and identified gaps and allowed concepts of theory to emerge, thereby influencing subsequent interviews and focus groups.

Following field work the interviews were revisited by printing, reading and marking for notes and initial thoughts, then reread for codes. Each interview was then uploaded into NVivo software, and divided into nodes according to the emic themes. This procedure followed grounded theory and allowed for the voices of the participants to guide the analysis. Attention was given to the fact that communities are not homogeneous

units and that age, class and gender as well as external and internal processes and institutions, including the Urban Community Project, were influencing the women's experiences and responses and acknowledging the political economy of power.

### 3.8 Limitations

Although the epistemological approach was time consuming, the commitment was repaid with rich data. Unfortunately, the women were not able to be present during the writing of this report, which left the power of pen in my hands. In an ideal situation the report would have been reviewed in detail with the participants during writing and final presentation. The distance to the field and funding issues restricted the opportunity for me to reconnect with the participants. Furthermore, as per the epistemological approach, a great deal of reflexivity was required to ensure the group was not led to certain results. It is not certain whether the questions contained within the initial semi-structured interviews on the topic of gardening had influenced the participants' results.

The way in which a researcher accesses and maintains participation throughout a study can impact the type of study that is performed and the data collected (Athens 1984). A high level of participation was achieved and can be attributed to the interactive research process obtained through PAR. My extended temporal relationship with the Centre enhanced the ease of entry into the field and the comfort level of the participants with myself as researcher. However, two limiting factors must be considered.

Firstly, both directors, the Haitian Sister and myself, held positions of power and were gatekeepers to resources. The Sister decided who received food aid, education funding and access to micro-credit loans while I was responsible for the delivery of the Centre's yearly budget which included money for the micro-credit program. Participating women were left in a position of appeasing the Directors to gain access to programming. I made repeated attempts to clarify that the research project was an activity separate from the Centre and would not facilitate the transfer of resources from myself directly, or from the Centre's budget. In addition, the Sister was not present at any of the interviews or focus group meetings. Despite these efforts the power dynamic influenced the results and flaws did occur. In hindsight, it would have been beneficial to hold the meetings

elsewhere, thereby creating a physical separation to reinforce that the Centre was not funding the study.

Secondly, Haiti has a long history of interference by foreign powers at all levels including NGOs at the local level. NGOs are structured to meet their self-designed institutional mission statements and Haitians are well practised in mitigating and negotiating the programs offered by NGOs. This dynamic did appear within this study. Many times I was asked for financial support to educate children, house repairs and other needs. I was adamant with the group that I would not be supplying financial resources, but rather I would only facilitate the research project and use my connections for speakers and future partnerships to assist them in meeting their goals. This power dynamic influenced the results of the project and is discussed further in the Chapter Five and Six. Thirdly, the logistics of the project impacted my ability to collect meaningful data. For instance, although the chosen translator was respectful and established friendships with the participants, and listened intently to instruction on how the research was to be conducted, he was not trained in the various nuances of food security. Differences in culture and education impacted my ability to completely understand all aspects of the information received, although triangulation of data helped to mitigate the issue.

As the project progressed and developed into a viable activity separate from the Centre, it became apparent that the research project had threatened the position of power that the Sister had in relation to the women. The Sister used her position to influence the project and the choices of the women, invoking cultural norms in order to undermine the study. This is discussed further in Chapter Six.

Sampling is an important consideration. Purposeful sampling is a qualitative strategy to locate participants that are 'information rich cases' and will speak with ease (Patton 1990). Interviewing of the participants halts when they reveal no new information and saturation has been reached. The disadvantage of this exploratory study is its limited generalizability. Due to the small sample size I am not able to determine whether what was observed is unique or typical of this socio-economic group in Cap Haitien. In particular, due to the influence of the presence of the Centre and myself, the exploratory study is very limited in its application to other groups of women.

### 3.9 Conclusions

In this chapter I outlined the epistemological and ontological foundations of feminist political ecology, the methodological framework of PAR specific to this applied case study, the overarching method of PAR, the complementary qualitative research tools deployed, and the methods used for data analysis. Attention has been applied throughout the design of this study to address the power imbalance between researcher and the participants. By placing the researcher participants in control of the direction and outcome of the process, acknowledging their situated knowledge and their gendered experience of food security I have managed to integrate the feminist approach with PAR methodology. Throughout the fieldwork I endeavoured to balance the role of facilitator to accompany the women through a process of evaluation and analysis, and allowed the direction of the discussion to be determined by the participants. It is the process was significant, and which allowed the participants to find solutions within their own lives. In the following chapter, Cap Haitien Field Results, I will discuss the data gathered and present it within an adapted version of Bina Agarwal's bargaining framework.

# Chapter Four
# Cap Haitien Site Description

## 4.0 Introduction

This food security research project transpired in Cap Haitien, Haiti with thirty women who volunteered to become participants and to analyze their food insecurity. To better conceptualize the experience of these women this section will provide a basic description of the country, city, neighbourhoods, food shed, and an introduction to the gender inequality present in Cap Haitien. A food shed is defined within this study as the geographical area from which a central location, such as a city, sources its food (Essex 2010). This description will aid the reader in understanding the unique characteristics of this study the context in which the participants lived.

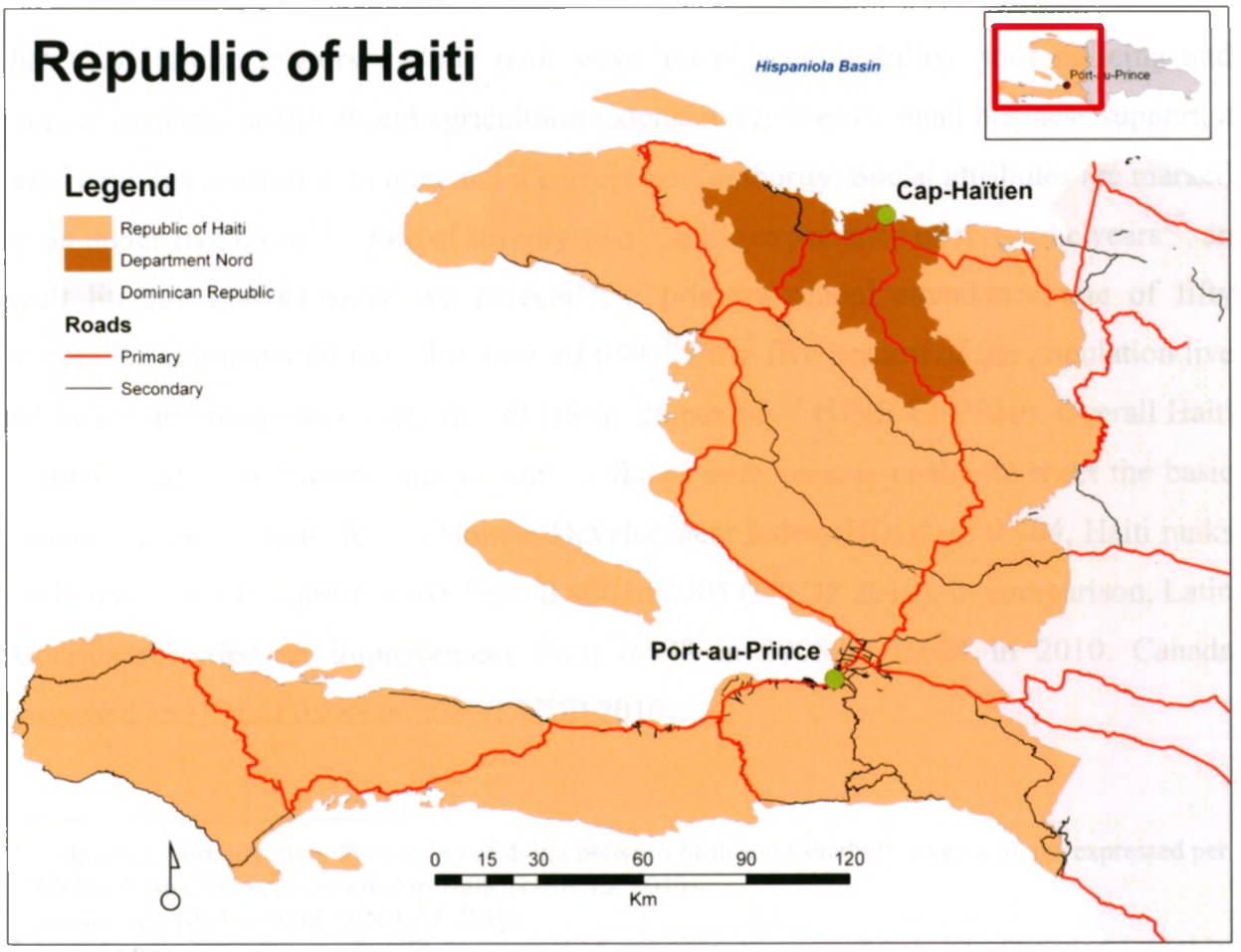
## 4.1 The Republic of Haiti

The research project occurred in Haiti (see Map 4.1), the western half of an island shared with the Dominican Republic and located in the West Indies. Haiti is a rugged and mountainous country with small fertile patches along the coastal lowlands and central plateaus, which mark past and present plantations. The mountainous terrain, however, is highly eroded, as subsistence peasants farm on the steep slopes and thin soil in an effort to make a living. Officially recognized as a French possession in 1711, Haiti was known as the Jewel of the Antilles as it was the richest colony in the world, receiving 1597 ships per year (CLR James 1980:50) The imperialistic tendencies of France aided the expropriation of wealth and resources and relocated decision making power to the French elite. This structure, as explained in Chapter Two, facilitated the extraction of cheap goods and labour, and enhanced a system of class racism between the masses of impoverished and the elite trading class which still exists today. During the years of French colonial control the deep port of Cap Haitien was instrumental in exporting agricultural production to the French metropolises and today remains one of four main shipping harbours in Haiti.

## 4.2 Cap Haitien

Cap Haitian, founded in 1670 by the French, is located in Department Nord, on Haiti's north coast on the Hispaniola Basin (Map 4.1). The city is approximately 70 km from the border of the Dominican Republic and is separated from the southern half of the island by an extensive mountain range. The terrain and poor road conditions impede transportation, making the 150 km distance to the capital Port-au-Prince a six hour drive.

**Map 4.1 The Republic of Haiti**




Source: M. Healy UWO Geography Department 2010, Geofabrik Openstreet Map for Haiti 2010.

Cap Haitien is the second largest urban centre in Haiti, with a population of almost 200,000 in the original city centre, and over 800,000 inclusive of the greater Cap Haitien area. The city's population growth rate of 5.1 % per year[15] (UNICEF 2010) has

[15] Average annual growth rate of urban population (%), 2000-2008 (UNICEF 2010).

been driven by the migration of rural inhabitants to the urban centre in search of food, employment, and services. The result of this growth has been the expansion of slums on all three sides of the city, two of which are scattered on steep mountain slopes, while one lies in the valley that extends to the south east. The fourth side of the city is hemmed in by the ocean. No municipal or federal planning has been implemented to facilitate the infrastructure needs for the city's population explosion.

Lack of proper infrastructure, including sanitary sewers, garbage collection, potable water, road maintenance, electrical supply, hospital and school services, is one of the characteristics that Cap Haitien shares with the rest of Haiti. Other political attributes that Cap Haitien mirrors include poor government accountability, poor policing and judicial systems, nearly absent agricultural extension services or small business support, a poorly run tax collection system and a corrupt port authority. Social attributes are marked by an under five mortality rate of seventy-two[16], a life expectancy of sixty-one years[17], an adult literacy rate of sixty-two percent[18], a primary school attendance rate of fifty percent[19] and a maternal mortality ratio of 670.[20] Fifty-five percent of the population live below the international poverty line of US $1.25 per day[21] (UNICEF 2010). Overall Haiti is considered a poor nation and to some a failed state, as it is unable to meet the basic needs of its population. With a Human Development Index (HDI)[22] of 0.404, Haiti ranks 145th out of 169 countries, down from 0.406 in 2005 (UNDP 2010). In comparison, Latin America recorded an improvement from 0.598 in 2005 to 0.624 in 2010. Canada possessed an HDI of 0.888 in 2010(UNDP 2010).

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[16] Under-five mortality rate - Probability of dying between birth and exactly five years of age expressed per 1,000 live births. Statistic recorded in 2008. (UNICEF 2010)

[17] Statistic recorded in 2008. (UNICEF 2010)

[18] Adult literacy rate - Percentage of persons aged 15 and over who can read and write. Statistic recorded in 2003-2008. (UNICEF 2010).

[19] Net primary school enrolment/attendance - Derived from net primary school enrolment rates as reported by UNESCO/UIS (UNESCO Institute of Statistics) and from national household survey reports of attendance at primary school. Statistic recorded in 2003-2008. (UNICEF 2010).

[20] Maternal mortality ratio - Annual number of deaths of women from pregnancy-related causes per 100,000 live births, adjusted for under reporting and misclassification. Statistic reported 2005. (UNICEF 2010).

[21] % of population below $1 a day - Percentage of population living on less than $1.08 a day at 1993 international prices(equivalent to $1 a day in 1985 prices, adjusted for purchasing power parity).Statistics recorded 1992-1997. (UNICEF 2010).

[22] The HDI represents a push for a broader definition of well-being and provides a composite measure of three basic dimensions of human development: health, education and income. (UNDP 2010).

Cap Haitien employment consisted of two small t-shirt factories of less than fifteen employees each, an ice factory, a rum factory, a Culligan water industry, public and private schools, government positions, a multitude of small local and international non-government organizations (NGOs) and larger international organizations. Haiti has been called the republic of NGOs in recognition of the over 10 000 NGOs operating in the country (Hallward 2007). It was observed that most of the smaller organizations in the Cap Haitien area were Christian based, each following their own self-determined mission statements, and often not registered with the government. The majority of population are underemployed as labourers or market vendors known as commerce women.

The poor economy and persistent underemployment combined with a history of colonialism and humanitarian intervention, as well as a lack of government social and economic support has had a profound impact upon the lives of Haitians. Broadly stated, one can conclude that a cycle of dependency upon foreign aid has been created and is maintained. The cycle of dependency is upheld by the Haitian diasporas who in 2007 were responsible for twenty percent of Haiti`s GDP (Ratha 2003). Remittances occur between the international Haitian diasporas and relatives or friends, and between successful Haitians that remain on the island. Becoming associated with NGOs, or other foreigners and calling upon relatives for support is a survival strategy which many Haitians use and which resonated with the participants, ultimately affecting the project and the outcomes. This will be discussed further in the Chapter Five.

### 4.3 Neighbourhood Descriptions

Neighbourhood descriptions are provided so that the reader may have a greater appreciation of the landscape in which these women carry out their day to day lives.

#### 4.3.1 Bleu Hills

Bleu Hills, located on Map 4.2, consists of former flood plains that are located in a delta that drains to the ocean. The area has in part been filled with garbage by the local municipal governments and topped with a gravel fill provided by USAID (2008). Improvements included roadways that reach one third of the area occupants. This neighbourhood was appropriately called Bleu Hills capturing the essence of the

residence's problem. As former flood plains the high water table increases the likelihood of annual flooding, especially during the hurricane season. The construction of homes was somewhat better than other neighbourhoods since many people living here were given cash in compensation for the forced relocation during the Cap Haitien airport expansion project.

Only one woman participant resided in Blue Hills. She owned a spacious (relative to the other women) cement block home with one small bedroom for herself and six children, an eating area and a large unfinished room with a dirt floor for laundry and cooking. She also owned a latrine, which she shared with her neighbour, and room for a garden which she was beginning to work. This has been impeded by flooding and neighbouring cows. The neighbourhood homes were spaced well apart from one another, and all homes were built with cement floors one to two feet above the ground due to recurring flooding. During extreme weather episodes the residents are warned to evacuate to higher ground through radio announcements and cellular phone text messages. Rescue from homes by boat was not uncommon. The mosquito population was high, and infected with malaria and denjue fever, however a steady breeze from the ocean and mosquito nets help the residents cope. During severe weather this participant did not have any other location to retreat to, so she endured the storms and hoped for the best.

Electricity was available but not reliable. Potable and wash water required manual transport by bucket to the home, a distance of 400m. During the rainy season this participant complained about the mud she has to walk through to arrive home and the impact this had on her health. Presently, to travel from downtown Cap to her home required a tap tap[23] ride, a boat ride and then a fifteen minute walk which crosses canals on rickety wooden bridges. This home visit occurred on a beautiful sunny day, creating an idyllic impression of the neighbourhood. However, it was easy to see how the dirt paths would turn to mud, the distance travelled daily with food, fuel and water supplies would become a burden, and how the fear of flooding and the constant bombardment of mosquitoes would impact the quality of life for this family. A new road is slated to be

[23] A taptap is Creole for taxi. Generally it was a van or pickup truck with a topper and wooden bench to carry passengers up and down the main traffic corridors of the city. The cost was 25 gourds ($.63 US) within the city limits and 50 gourds ($1.25US) to travel past Buray ai Butay.

built in the coming years by USAID which the participant suggested would push up land and home prices.

**Map 4.2 Food Markets: Cap Haitien**


Source: M. Healy UWO Geography Department 2010, Geofabrik Openstreet Map for Haiti 2010, NASA ASTER 30m Elevation Data for Haiti 2010, author's GPS Data.

### 4.3.2 Central Cap Haitien

Central Cap Haitien was the oldest part of the city and is still marked with beautiful French architecture in desperate need of repair. The area was home to all of the hotels in the city including the historic Roi Christophe and Mont Joli to name only two. It is also the location of the Versaille disco and movie theatre, numerous restaurants, a paved boulevard along the ocean with benches, several parks, basketball courts, a gymnasium, the Central Market, private schools, the elite language school, university

faculties, the city's banking centre, head offices of many major NGOs and MINUSTAH[24] Head Quarters, a large contingent of armed soldiers and heavy equipment, the port docks and elite housing. Intermingled with these wealthy neighbourhoods were poor neighbourhoods home to five of the participants. Surrounding this downtown area were the poor neighbourhoods of Lourea, Selicrow, and Calvery.

### 4.3.3 Bel Air, Lourea, Selicrow, Calvery, St Philomene

The shanty towns of Bel Air, Lourea, Selicrow, Calvery and St Philomene were built on the steep mountain slopes that surround the original city centre to the north, northwest, west and southwest. In each of these neighbourhoods lived one participant, with the exception of two that lived in St. Philomene. These neighbourhoods were cooler in temperature because of the elevation and limited tree coverage. As the neighbourhoods reach the city the terrain levelled out and the density of housing increased, with the dwellings often attached to each other or spaced just far enough apart for dirt foot paths. At this point, tree coverage disappeared and dust and noise increased. In effect these were hot concrete neighbourhoods at the edge of the city core. The occasional dirt road may transect the neighbourhoods, but more often concrete roads circled neighbourhoods, in effect marking the boundaries between them. On the highest slopes there was more vegetation and the space between dwellings increased, which created some privacy, less foot traffic and a somewhat cleaner environment. The homes, or more accurately shacks, were pieced together with scavenged wood or cinder blocks with corrugated metal roofs. Occasionally a better dwelling was rented and thus better constructed, sometimes including a cement roof. Most homes were single level dwellings while rented dwellings closer to the city were built three stories high with twisted paths of cement stairs and low ceilings winding their way past the open sleeping quarters of other residents. All homes lack appropriate compliance with safe building codes and were at high risk of collapse during an earthquake or mudslide. Travel to and from work, the market, or water and

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[24] MINUSTAH is the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti, established on June 1 2004 by Security Council Resolution 1542. "MINUSTAH's original mandate was to restore a secure and stable environment, to promote the political process, to strengthen Haiti's Government institutions and rule-of-law-structures, as well as to promote and to protect human rights" (United Nations 2010). Their presence in Haiti is very contested by international onlookers and the population of Haiti.

charcoal collection requires a concerted effort due to the distance and the terrain. The challenge was multiplied during inclement weather, which turned mud paths and open sewers into slippery hazards.

Sanitary infrastructure was not installed, leaving the slums criss-crossed with open sewers that run down from the steep mountain slopes to the city proper and out to the ocean. No personal latrines were observed during the home visits, although two women expressed a desire to construct them in the near future. A few compostable community toilets existed due to the NGO SOIL, however further installations were required to serve the existing population. The older areas of the city have sewer systems that drain directly to the ocean. Municipal workers can be observed dredging the sewer system of the silt that had washed down from the mountains following heavy rainfalls.

Community water faucets provided free unfiltered water. Culligan drinking water was available for purchase at five gourds ($US0.13) for one gallon. Electricity was available, although unreliable, and residents were ingenious as they illegally tapped into existing electric lines to power their homes. Generally there was one double sized bed which was shared by many (children and adults), with other mattresses, or just plastic sheets and blankets, on the floor. Windows were not screened and mosquitoes, and the diseases they carry, such as malaria and dengue fever, were a concern.

### 4.3.4 Nazor Street, Shada, Buray ai Butay

Nazor Street was located on the west side of Highway 1 and Shada was located on the east side of Haiti's Highway 1, each home to one participant, was the route taken to exit the city toward Port au Prince. These neighbourhoods were still within the original city footprint marked by the city gates of Buray ai Butay. These neighbourhoods had a few remnants of their French colonial past, but substandard housing was built tightly between the original buildings, leaving only foot paths. This area was impoverished, although the living conditions, building construction, water and sanitary conditions were slightly better. The Shada neighbourhoods were built between the city centre and ocean, and were built with the foundations of homes right to the water's edge leaving them susceptible to damage during severe weather. Shada and Nazor Street were elevated and not susceptible to flooding, unlike Blue Hills and Fort St. Michel area which flood

annually. There were no public green spaces in Shada. However, crowds of people congregate at the Ouinamet Bus Station, the hub for all transportation of people and goods from the east of the city including the Dominican Republic. Movement of food through the Ouinamet Station and the Shada market I and II is discussed in the Food Shed section of this chapter. The entrance to the Shada neighbourhood was marked by a historic roundabout topped with a statue of Dessalines, the leader of the Haitian revolution. Nazor Street was situated south of the football pitch, the only public venue for watching organized sports in the city. Neighbourhood football matches occurred on empty dirt lots throughout the city's shantytowns. Nazor Street also had its own smaller local food market.

Buray ai Butay was considered the gates of the original Cap Haitien city. Neighbourhoods outside (East, West and South) of the gates were considered more dangerous in which to reside, and was home to one participant. When political manifestations occur, the cities gates are often closed to traffic movement by protesters or armed forces, rebel or otherwise. The manager of Capital Bank reported that he was required to find housing within the city gates to reach and open the bank during milder disturbances (I26: June 6). Buray ai Butay is home to one of two basketball courts outside of the city centre. Beside Buray ai Butay is the transportation hub – the Port-au-Prince Station – for locations south and west of the city.

### 4.3.5 Outside the Buray ai Butay Gates of Cap Haitien

#### 4.3.5.1 Cite du Peuple, Vertiere, Cite Chovel, Champin

Cite du Peuple and Vertiere were considered districts outside the main city and each were home to one participant. Cite Chovel and Champin were areas within the district of Vertiere. Vertiere was similar to the city centre in its class division and was the second richest area of the city. Being located outside the city gates of Buray ai Butay translates into increased security risks, thus large elite homes had walled yards and gated entrances for vehicles. Next to these elite neighbourhoods were poorer slum areas similar to others already described. Like other elite homes and businesses, these homes will pump water from wells into towers to be gravity fed throughout the home. The Cite du Peuple and Champin markets service these areas.

#### 4.3.5.2 Aviation, Fort Michelle, Konnasa

The areas of Aviation, Fort Michelle and Konnasa were each home to one participant and were located outside the city gates. These areas experienced greater security threats and flooding. These neighbourhoods were located on low-lying land, and the homes were constructed with foundations one to two feet above the ground, similar to Bleu Hills. The area had more garbage and open cesspools than any other neighbourhood. A higher section of land in Aviation was home to another large MINUSTAH housing complex with armed uniformed soldiers and heavy equipment. The water was highly contaminated with trash and run off and many people were sick. The sewers were open ditches but new sewers were being installed. Aviation is home to the second basketball court outside of the downtown core. The Fort Michel market was the main market servicing these neighbourhoods.

### 4.4 Cap Haitien Food Shed

Studying the food shed of Cap Haitien with the volunteer participants allowed me to better understand the spatial determinants of the available food supply and how it impacted food security. The food shed of Cap Haitien included the food sources from the geographical area surrounding the city, the neighbouring country of the Dominican Republic and international sources. Haiti was incorporated into the global food economy and as such receives much of its staple grains and processed food products mainly from the United States, and the Dominican Republic. Local fresh fruits, vegetables, spices and staple grains arrived from the surrounding countryside, with particular rural locations being known for producing certain items, although most areas would produce a bit of everything. The Hispaniola Basin provided fish and sea food daily. Map 4.3 indicates the general flow of food goods into the city. The spatial distribution of speciality production, listed in Table 4.1 could indicate growing conditions (soil, rain fall, altitude), traditional geographical growing traditions, historical influence by NGOs, or knowledge of the women's familiar agricultural connections. More research is needed to understand this spatial distribution of production and how this distribution could be interrupted.

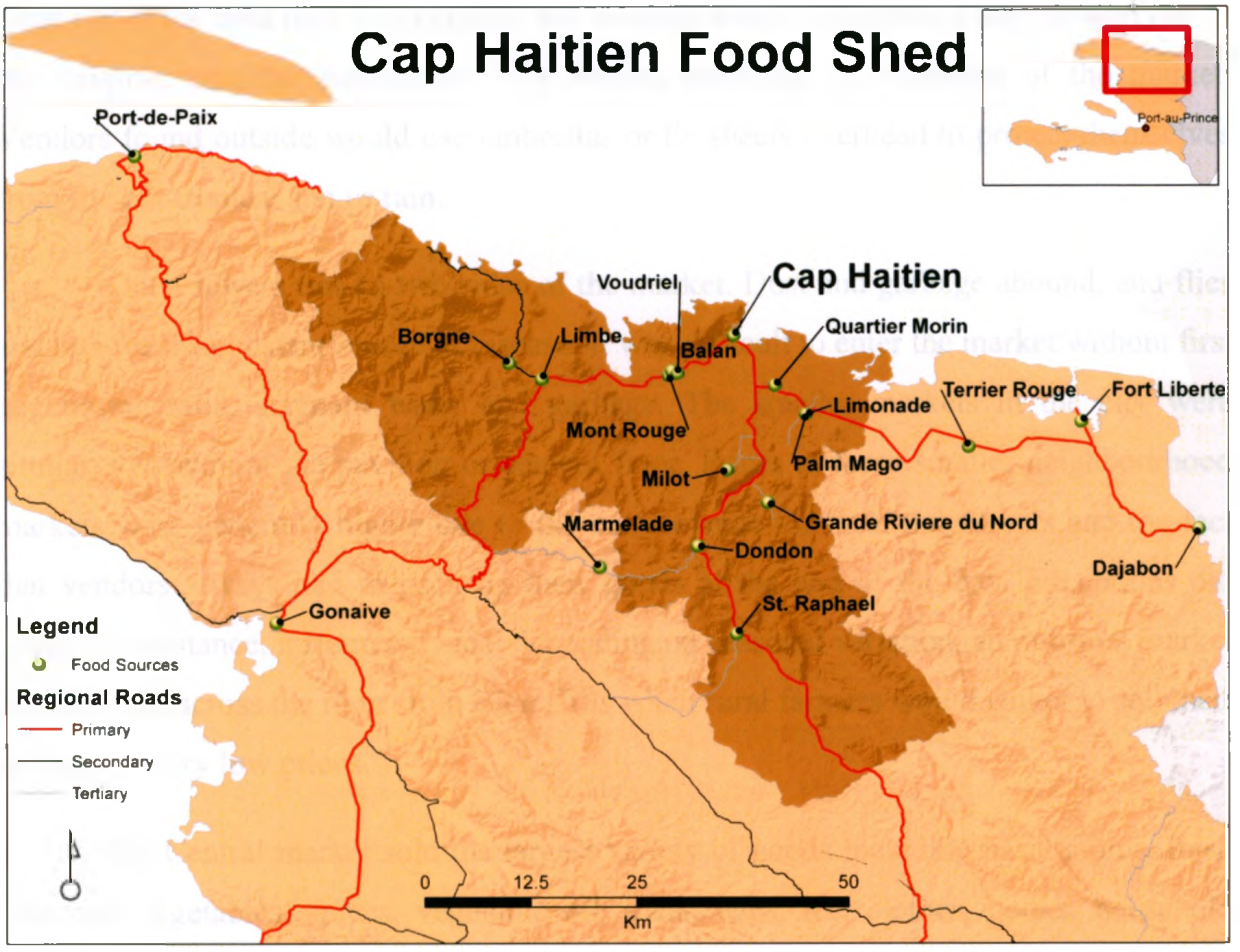
**Table 4.1 Cap Haitien Catchment Area– Agricultural Production**

| Location | Vegetables | Location | Vegetable |
|---|---|---|---|
| St. Raphel | Vegetable-cabbage, spinach, lettuce, yams, plantain | Palm Mago | Lamn (fruit) |
| Terrier Rouge | Marichad (vegetable) | Mont Rouge | Fruit |
| Marmalade | Rice and Meat | Borgne | Charcoal |
| Gonaive (Artibonite Valley) | Rice | Limonade | Bananas |
| Borne | Plantain | Dondon | Beans |

The local markets that sold food and goods were located throughout the city, strategically located near neighbourhoods and high traffic areas. Of the two largest markets Shada was the largest and had the lowest prices. However, it resembled more of a distribution point with many vehicles, loud negotiations for volume purchases and divided goods hauled away in wheelbarrows (*bourèts*). This activity and function of this activity created an atmosphere of distribution and less of a shopping market, thereby making the preferred shopping space the large Central Market. The Central Market was favoured by the participants due to the low prices, the variety of goods, and proximity to work, home, and main transportation routes. However, the women would also buy from markets or boutiques closer to their neighbourhoods during the hours after five when it was less safe to travel, on days that they did not travel to the city centre, when the weight of goods was prohibitive, when they could not afford transportation, if the weather was not cooperative or when there was political instability. The neighbourhood markets discussed and found in Map II include the Central Market, Shada Market, Cite du Peuple, Champin, St. Philomene, Fort St. Michelle, Nazor Street, Bleu Hills Market and the Port-au-Prince Station located at Baray ai Boutey. Boutiques are small shops run out of homes and are the most expensive sources of food. The women never utilized boutiques as a source of food except in extreme political upheaval or severe weather when the

neighbourhood markets were closed due to mud and water, or when weather prohibited travel to the Central Market.

**Map 4.3 Cap Haitien Food Shed**




Source: M. Healy UWO Geography Department 2010, Geofabrik Openstreet Map for Haiti 2010, NASA ASTER 30m Elevation Data for Haiti 2010, author's GPS Data, Google Earth Data (2010).

### 4.4.1 Descriptions of Markets

The markets accessed by the participants were open air, except for the Central Market, which had a beautiful but weathered iron pavilion resembling French European architecture. The Central Market was government owned but privately run by the many vendors in the market, who were left to negotiate space with each other. The city occasionally sent in garbage trucks and left the women vendors to organize the garbage clean up. The government did not upkeep the premises in any other manner except to provide electricity twenty four hours per day without disruption, regardless of power outages to other areas of the city. With this benefit the Central Market was able to stay

open until ten o'clock, or twelve midnight on weekends, and twenty-four hours during holiday seasons. Vendors with large inventories often slept with their goods to avoid theft, while smaller displays would be packed up and left at a nearby rented location. The floor under the iron roof was cement, but vendors were so numerous they flowed out of the pavilion into the surrounding dirt streets, doubling the footprint of the market. Vendors found outside would use umbrellas or tie sheets overhead to protect themselves from the hot tropical sun or rain.

Open sewers run on two sides of the market. Dust and garbage abound, and flies and rats were a constant source of disease. It was difficult to enter the market without first negotiating mud, stagnant water and garbage. The smaller markets in the city were similar, yet without the pavilion or cement floor. Prices at these smaller neighbourhood markets were generally higher due to the convenience for local neighbours and the fact that vendors always had to pack up their goods at the end of the day. Exceptions did occur. For instance, infrequently and depending on seasonal variation, an informal market would occur across the river from Bleu Hills when rural farmers would gather to sell their produce at very low prices.

The Central market sold the largest variety of goods including basic grains, fresh fruit and vegetables, spices, vegetable oil, meat, eggs, ice, clothes, books, household supplies, cell phones, DVD players and other electronic items. The market also provided services like tailoring, baked goods and cooked food. The Shada market also carried a large variety of goods but was more of a distribution point than a public market.

### 4.4.2 Flow of Food

There were two Shada markets: Shada I was the original market, the larger of the two, and situated on the west side of the street while Shada II came later and was located on the east side. Both markets are supplied through the Ouinamet bus station located nearby. The station was a drop off point for people, goods and food being transported from the rural areas to the east of Cap Haitien, for instance Limonade, Madeline, Quartier-Morin, Terrier Rouge, St. Raphel, and other communities toward and including Dajabon, the border crossing from the Dominican Republic (see Map 4.3).

The Shada markets were the cheapest markets in the city and were very congested and loud while people conducted their daily bargaining. These markets supplied an estimated 60% of the Central Market's goods and hired male labour was seen shuttling goods from the Shada markets to the Central market by wheelbarrow, called a *bourèt* in Creole, a distance of approximately 1.5km through the city. This movement of goods took place early in the morning prior to opening of the daily market in order to avoid the heat, dust and congestion of regular city activity. Wheelbarrows of plantain, bananas and even large blocks of ice were moved in this manner.

Close to Buray ai Butay was the Port-au-Prince central bus depot, the main bus station for travellers to make transfers and for movement of goods from the west and south of Haiti including Limbe, Borne, Palm Mago, Marmalade, Gonaive, Port au Paix all the way to Port au Prince (see Map 4.3). Goods transported to this station supplied about 10% of the Central Market's inventory. An agronomist working for the International Organization of Migration noted that white mango, Baptist mango, and mango jn-Marie varieties are not grown in Department Nord (I31: June 5) indicating the reliance on the Port-au-Prince region for certain varieties of fresh food, a supply disrupted by the earthquake in 2010. There was no large trading market like Shada I and II at the Port-au-Prince Station but rather a small market that catered to people switching buses or where vendors collected goods from known suppliers. Only a small amount of goods came from the south of Haiti. This fact needs explanation considering the immensity of the geographical area that could supply Cap Haitien. It is an indicator of the fertile land located much closer to the east of the city, to the strength of the supply chain to the Dominican Republic, to the volume of foreign imports that pass through the port, and finally the size of the mountain range which inhibits transportation from the south. Through the port over sixty-five metric tonnes of food aid was reportedly delivered monthly and distributed to the local population by the World Food Programme to Cap Haitien by ship (WFP 2008). The port of Cap Haitien remains one of the five main entry points for food aid (WFP 2010).

Diverted food aid was observed being sold in the local markets instead of reaching the intended feeding programs located at schools and NGOs. Other sources that supplied the Central Market were the local fishers that brought their daily catch, food

imports that arrived through the port and a few local rural and peri-urban farmers that sold their produce directly to the consumers. The Central Market supplied the neighbourhoods of Lourea, Blue Hills, Calvery, Selicrow and Navo Street directly, but also supplied the markets of Cite du Peuple, Champin, and St. Philomene.

Cite du Peuple had the third largest market in Cap Haitien, after Shada, and was supplied by the Central Market and also the rural areas of Limbe, Palm Mago, and Borgne, and local urban gardeners. This market supplied the surrounding neighbourhoods of Vertiere, and Citi Chovel. This market was large but had a limited range and variety of products offered. Cite du Peuple sells food produce rather than material goods. However stock was limited in quantity and variety and supplies ran out early in the day. During periods of extended rain all markets except for the Central and Shada became extremely muddy, forcing the markets to close and the consumer to travel further. Prices were higher at Cite du Peuple since supplies are fewer and the vendors have a geographically "captured market".

Champin, the fourth largest market, Cite du Peuple, St Philomene, Fort Michelle and Nazor Street were supplied by the Central Market, and all supplied the neighbourhoods adjacent to them as found in Table 4.2. These markets had less variety and quantity of goods and higher prices.

The markets were dominated by women vendors, especially in clothing and food sales, however male vendors were present and the tailoring section of the central market was solely run by men. Women were viewed as being good at business and it was a highly desired job within the group of participants. Commerce is also considered by the participants as employment for those that do not have any education (I5:May16). This position was advantageous because it left the women in control of the money used to support the family (I22:May 21).

### 4.5 Participants

The women involved in this study were participants in the various programs offered at the Urban Community Project (UCP) in Cap Haitien. The project was founded by Sr. Rosemary Fry of Toronto, Canada. Fry followed a charity aid model with a nutrition centre, education program and an unsuccessful commerce program that made

small loans but was unable to lift women to a higher economic status. At the time of this research project Rayjon Share Care was attempting to alter the structure of its organization into a sustainable model whose focus was self-empowerment. A micro-credit program was established to replace the commerce program with the intention of including business, entrepreneurial and literacy training. A garden was established in the rural countryside with the purpose of reducing reliance by the Centre on World Food Programme handouts, and to contribute to the strengthening of local rural production. The volunteer participants were women that participated in one or more of the aforementioned programs. Although generalized as 'urban poor' the individual attributes of the women's lives differed from one another, therefore this group was not homogeneous. These attributes are listed in Table 4.2 and described below.

### 4.5.1 Attributes of Participants

All the women were volunteer participants in the research project and ranged in age from eighteen to sixty-five, with a mean age of thirty three, where n=twenty.[25] The households varied in marital status, including three married, four co-habiting, three considered widowed (one husband missing, two deceased) and 10 reported being single. The missing husband had traveled to the Dominican Republic to find employment and had never returned, a common story repeated among women in Haiti. Only four of the women interviewed reported being born in Cap Haitien while the rest migrated from the surrounding countryside either with their families as children or by themselves due to family upset (death, pregnancy), economic reasons (loss of access to farm land or inability to generate income) or to attend secondary school. Of the families, thirteen had children enrolled in the nutrition program at the Urban Community Project for a total of nineteen children or twenty-seven percent of the seventy-one children cared for by these women. At the time of this research project a total of nine women reported persistent food shortages, while 6 women reported occasional food shortages, and five women reported no real food shortages, yet all the women explained that they may not eat the quality or type of food that they wish. This relative stability of access to food, for a

[25] Thirty women volunteered as participants of which 20 volunteered to be interviewed. It is from these interviews that the data for this discussion was extracted and as such n=20.

portion of the group, was indicative to the relative stability of the socio-political and ecological environment at the time of this research. These values would depreciate with deteriorating conditions common to Haiti. Only one woman of the research group lived with her extended middle class family, thus she enjoyed a security of basic needs that the other women did not. All of the other women could be considered poor[26] based on their inability to meet their basic needs or the necessary basic goods and services for survival including food and proper housing.

Money spent on food ranged from twenty-five to one hundred percent of total income, with a mean value of fifty-three percent.[27] Income was generally earned through commerce activities, which refers to the selling of used clothes (*peppy*[28]), cooked food, personal hygiene items, cleaning or household food supplies. Of the women three reported selling food, one sold boxes of corn flakes and two women sold produce from their gardens. One woman worked as a cook, and augmented her small wage with commerce activities. Another woman worked as a water technician selling a water purification system, for which the training opportunity, seed money, as well as space to run her business were provided by the Centre. Of the women, only four did not report any income generating strategy.

The women lived in the different neighbourhoods previously described, all traveling different distances and across different types of terrain. Four women rented their living spaces, seven women lived with friends or family, and nine owned their homes. The older women generally owned their homes, and for the most part were married or widowed except for one participant, who was given cash for relocation during the airport expansion project, and another who was able to gain financial support from her father and

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[26]Poverty as defined by the World Bank (2010) is pronounced deprivation in well-being, and comprises many dimensions. It includes low incomes and the inability to acquire the basic goods and services necessary for survival with dignity. Poverty also encompasses low levels of health and education, poor access to clean water and sanitation, inadequate physical security, lack of voice, and insufficient capacity and opportunity to better one's life.

[27] Twenty women were surveyed, two of which were young with no income and no support network from which to receive money for food purchases, these two women were not included in this discussion on income distribution, as such n=18.

[28] Peppy is used clothing which arrives from Canada and the United States in bales, from organizations like the Goodwill, is sold to the commerce women through intermediaries.

uncle. Only the woman who lived with her middle class family had piped water and flush toilets. Two other women owned latrines, five had access to public toilets, and the remaining twelve did not have access to any form of toilet. Nineteen of the women indicated that they would be interested in gardening with only one declining and simply stating that she would prefer to build a house if she had access to land.

The older women also had older children, and female children would take care of household chores and grandchildren allowing the woman to spend more time on income generating activities. Seven women took care of children that were not their own, either children of other family members or orphans. In all Haitian classes one can find families that take in non-related children as domestic help. These children, may be *restavecs*, referring to a child sent to a slightly more affluent household where the child fills the position of an unpaid servant for room and board. Occasionally these children will be allowed to attend school, but usually work long hours and are treated poorly and often sexually abused. Many scholars refer to these children as modern day slaves.[29] The research questions were not designed to determine if children of the participants were *restavecs*. It is a common cultural practice in Haiti that families will care for other people's children.

[29] For further reading see Janak, Timothy C., (1998) Haiti's "Restavec" slave children:Difficult choices, difficult lives, yet...Lespwa fe Viv University of Texas Press, or Cadet, Jean-Robert, (1998) Restavec:From Haitian Slave Child to Middle-Class American University of Texas Press.

**Table 4.2 Participant Attributes (n=20)**

| Attribute | Frequency or other descriptions | % of total | Total number |
|---|---|---|---|
| Reported Food Shortage | Never | 20% | 4 |
| | 2-3 times per year | 5% | 1 |
| | Occasionally | 30% | 6 |
| | 2-3 times per week | 30% | 6 |
| | Weeks without food | 15% | 3 |
| Housing | Owns | 45% | 9 |
| | Rents | 35% | 7 |
| | Lives with Friends/Family | 20% | 4 |
| Marital Status | Married | 15% | 3 |
| | Widowed | 15% | 3 |
| | Cohabitating | 20% | 4 |
| | Single | 50% | 10 |
| Employment | Commerce | 70% | 14 |
| | Other | 10% | 2 |
| | Not employed | 20% | 4 |
| Age | 18-25 | 20% | 4 |
| | 25-35 | 35% | 7 |
| | 35-45 | 30% | 6 |
| | >45 | 15% | 3 |
| Number of Children each participant had living with her | 0 – 1 | | 3 |
| | 2-3 | | 8 |
| | 4-5 | | 5 |
| | >5 | | 4 |
| Total | | | 71 |
| Children's Ages living with and cared for the female participants | < =5 | | 26 |
| | 6-10 | | 16 |
| | 11-15 | | 11 |
| | 16-20 | | 9 |
| | >20 | | 9 |
| Number of Children in Nutrition Program | | 26.7% | 19 |
| Place of Birth | Cap Haitien | 20% | 4 |
| | Surrounding Rural Area | 70% | 14 |
| | Other City | 10% | 2 |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Reason for Migration | Work<br>Parents died<br>School<br>Family breakup<br>Land access problems | 30%<br>25%<br>15%<br>15%<br>15% | 6<br>5<br>3<br>3<br>3 |
| Birth Place | Rural Village<br>Small town<br>Cap Haitien<br>Port-au-Prince | 70%<br>10%<br>15%<br>5% | 14<br>2<br>3<br>1 |
| Year of migration to Cap Haitien | 1980-1989<br>1990-1999<br>2000-2009 | | 9<br>2<br>6 |
| Interested in Gardening | Interested in Gardening<br>Currently Gardening<br>No Interest | 95%<br>15%<br>5% | 19<br>3<br>1 |
| Percentage of Income Spent on Food | 0-24<br>25-49<br>50-74<br>75-100 | 0<br>33%<br>44%<br>22% | |

The women participants lived dispersed throughout the city in the following neighbourhoods: Calvery, Blue Hills, Cite du Peuple, Selicrow, Buray ai Butay, Dondon, Bel Air, Vertieair, Aviation, Shada I and II, Lourea, Fort Michel, Fort Liberte, Nazor Street, Konnasa, St Philomene, all identified on Map 4.2. Nineteen of the women participants lived in poor neighbourhoods with conditions dangerous to their health and well-being due to few employment opportunities, poor sanitary conditions, unsafe building structures, poor access to good quality food and water, and the possibility of violent encounters with other residents. The women in Haiti fill an unequal social position in Haitian culture which makes them targets of violence. Eighty-five percent of the women were migrants with the majority of those women migrating in the 1980s and early 1990s during the initial collapse of the agricultural sector. The reasons for migration were listed as work, parent's death, school, family breakdown, and land access issues. During the collapse of income from family farming traditional male and female roles no longer were able to meet family needs. This initiated the breakdown of families and the migration for work. Without family incomes a death initiated the sale of agricultural land

to first cover medical and then funeral costs. Wives and daughters who relied upon the family agriculture to provide their needs would find themselves without access to income and often without access to land after the death of the male landowner. The retraction of social spending affected schools in rural locations and subsequent migration to the urban centre in search of education.

Five of the women who migrated in 2000 to 2010 represented young participants, with one migrating from Port-au-Prince, one from a small town, one born in Cap Haitien, and two from rural villages. Three of these young women stated death as the reason for their migration, with specifically one stating that her father's new wife demanded she leave. The other young women just stated poor family relations as their reason for leaving. The sixth woman was forty-six years of age at the time of the interview, reporting that she lost her home to a fire. She was not able earn the funds necessary to rebuild, so she migrated for work and shelter.

**4.6 Individual Lives**

This section provides individual vignettes of the women's lives. These four literary sketches will aid the reader in understanding the particular struggles experienced by some of the women, with the objective of deepening the readers understanding of the challenges of age, class and gender.

One thirty-nine year old participant was born (1970) in Tomassic, a small rural village not far from Cap Haitien. She lived with her family and agriculture was their sole source of income. In 1988, this woman's father died and soon after they migrated to Cap Haitien. This participant stated that as women, her and her mother, could not farm. The family's source of revenue had been dependent upon her father's labour, thus with his death she needed to migrate to Cap Haitien in search of work. When she first arrived she worked as a servant; today she sells peppy in the Central Market. The work was hard since the clothes were heavy but beneficial because she could cloth her children from her inventory. She looked after seven children, five of which she was the biological mother, and the other two were orphans. The children ranged in age from two to nineteen years of age with the youngest two being enrolled in the nutrition program at the Centre. She was fortunate in that she had a stable marriage and had been able to accumulate enough

capital to own a home with electricity in Calvery, a relatively safe neighbourhood located fairly close to the Central Market. She collected her water from a spring in the mountain and purified it with a bucket filter system provided by the Centre. Her family's diet consisted of mainly rice, beans, plantain, cornmeal and potatoes. Prior to owning a home she had to move four times because the rent kept increasing. In comparison to the group as a whole this woman had a relatively secure life, stating that with home ownership her life had improved over the last few years. With only 50% of her income spent to food, she was only food insecure occasionally. This woman also understood that diversity in a person's diet was desirable. In her words, "More plantain for strength, beans for school, the dry rice is incomplete" (I21:May21). This woman's age and stable relationship had given her time to establish herself and accumulate endowments. In Haitian society class determined by income is a more important marker than race or age. This participant was considered a slightly better class than some of the other women in the study.

A second participant, age nineteen, experienced extreme food shortages, reporting no food consumption three days a week. This young participant had already migrated twice, once from the small town of Milot (twelve km from Cap Haitien), then to Port-au-Prince with an Aunt. When the relationship with her Aunt became too difficult she migrated to Cap Haitien arriving in 2007. This participant had no family to rely upon in this urban setting and had no communication with her biological family. She did not participate in commerce other than to pick a few lamns (fruit) and to sell them when she was hungry. She had two children, one was two years old, the other two months old. The older child was enrolled in the nutrition program. This participant lived with another young girl and her small child. Household chores were divided equally between the two girls, who lived in Selicrow, a relatively safe neighbourhood in comparison to other areas, and fairly close to the Central Market. She typically ate rice and beans, but no meat. When she did not eat, which was often, she was tired and slept all day. She purchased three buckets of water each day for 5 gourds a piece. For comparison, in Cap Haitien, one avocado or one mango can be purchased for 5 gourds. From this vignette one can see that age affects a young woman's ability to cope with a food insecure position. Mainly her lack of commerce skills, her lack of social connections and her few

endowments keep her vulnerable to food shortages. These three attributes should improve with the experience of age and then her food security should slightly improve.

This third participant migrated from Grand River in 1981 at the age of one, at the time of this interview she was thirty-eight. Her father was unable to provide for the family so the family divided and the children migrated with their mother to Cap Haitien where she began work as a maid. When the participant returned to Grand River to visit her Aunt and six cousins she would take food to them. Her rural relatives were very poor. Presently, she lived in Chada with her cousins. She did not like Chada and would prefer to move to Fort St. Michel, a safer area of the city. This participant took care of two children, one child was her deceased brother's, the other an orphan. She lived beside the market in Chada which made public to the adjacent market women that she was poor. With this knowledge of class difference the market women would harass her when negotiating food prices. This participant ate a limited diet of rice with peas and fish regularly, because she does not have enough money to buy what she preferred. The participant reported that she sold fish in the market, which supplied her own diet, and that she used to sell turkey but it was no longer imported. Harassment of the participant based on socio-economic class was also apparent during participant observation at the water depot, banks and during market negotiation. Name calling and abusive language was not uncommon.

One nineteen year old participant was very vulnerable. Her young age translated into a combination of barriers. Her lack of bargaining skills, street knowledge, and few social connections left her vulnerable to sexual predators and very food insecure. This situation was aggravated by migration triggered by her parent's death. At the time of the interview she was living with strangers who had found her standing in the street with her nine month old baby. She expressed extreme humiliation with her situation. She ate only once a day and sometimes would get weak and fall. She was still nursing her nine month old boy. She bathed at the public water faucet and does not have access to a latrine. This was a common situation for young girls that were renting or living with other families in the denser shanty towns. This participant sold spices as commerce outside the place where she slept, but it was very unsuccessful. Sr. Grace had encouraged her to sell in the

market but the young woman felt she was too young to negotiate a place in the market to sell her goods. Her lack of negotiating skills made the process difficult and not enjoyable. After some time of living with this family, the husband began demanding sexual favours for the use of the room. At this point the participant turned to the Centre and asked for help and she was moved to another location.

### 4.7 Summary

This food security research project transpired in the setting of Cap Haitien. The described country, city, neighbourhoods, and food shed were the sites where the women negotiated spatial and social barriers to procure food. The vignettes were a partial picture of the attributes of age, class and gender presenting challenges in the participants' day to day lives. The following site description will aid the reader in better understanding the unique characteristics of this study and grasping the context in which the participants lived while considering the research findings presented in Chapter Five.

# Chapter Five

# Cap Haitien Field Results

## 5. 0 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings and information gathered during participatory fieldwork with the volunteer participants in Cap Haitien. I use an adapted version of Bina Agarwal's bargaining framework, which was discussed in Chapter Two, to reveal and analyse the social and spatial relations between four urban arenas: the household, markets, communities and institutions. These four arenas represent the spatialized field of power that the women must enter to bargain for food using their entitlements. Within each arena the women resist, sustain and construct their spatial identities. Spatial identity refers to the ways in which identities are constituted, articulated and contested within space and place (Gregory et al. 2009).

This chapter adds to the scholarly literature by exploring how social norms and social perceptions in Haiti affect intra-household and extra-household bargaining, linking the four arenas, or spaces, of the household, market, community and institutions present in the context of the participants' lives. This linkage will be achieved through an analysis of the socially constructed norms of gender, class, and age. Agarwal's bargaining framework has been adapted by substituting 'institutions' for the 'state' and by defining the bargaining 'determinants' as 'factors' relevant for this group of participants. The more expansive term 'institutions' was substituted for Agawal's 'state' in order to bring attention to the role that churches and non-government institutions, along with the state, play in enabling and creating barriers for the women. This exploratory study involved thirty subjects, and was not designed to establish causality; thus Agarwal's 'determinants' has been replaced with the term 'factors' to denote attributes which appear to influence gender bargaining.

This research framework reveals the gender dynamics in intra-household and extra-household bargaining, and demonstrates that bargaining is not a statistical or 'unitary' picture, which would negate the complexity of women's lives, but rather has qualitative perspectives that are both spatial and temporal. This qualitative study will

allow us to understand how the women of Cap Haitien resisted, sustained and constructed these critical aspects of their lives in an attempt to shape identities in the arenas impacted by dominant narratives. These dominant narratives shape, and are shaped by, socially constructed gender norms and institutions that work to keep women in a position of humiliation. This position of humiliation affected their feelings of self-worth, feelings of entitlement and their ability to bargain. By failing to meet the food needs of their families the women reported feelings of anxiety, depression, as well as ulcers (I20: May21; I14: May19; I11: May18).

This research examines how social norms and perceptions affect the bargaining process, how social norms and perceptions themselves are bargained over, and reveals how social norms control women's behaviour. These dynamics are all situated within the larger framework of responding to Haiti's changing food system. This chapter will outline some of the critical aspects for understanding bargaining from a gender perspective. This is not currently adequately addressed in the scholarly literature about Haiti. The bargaining framework, adapted from Agarwal, will be used to examine and analyze the various factors that affect the food procurement strategies utilized by this group of women. Four arenas were chosen to represent a framework of spaces in which to discuss the data. These spaces are fluid, dynamic and influenced by the changing political economy of food, Haitian society and culture, and the dynamic gendered roles of the women.

### 5.0.1 Social Perceptions: Social Norms

Gendered dynamics affect women's food security in both intra- and extra-household arenas. Gendered roles ascribe different attributes and abilities to men and women. These attributes and abilities begin as perceptions and then solidify into social norms (Agarwal 1997). Social norms expose themselves as power relations between men and women which in turn hinder or advance entitlements to food security in different ways. These relations are embodied in material and ideological forms and are revealed in labour, distribution of resources, ideas and representations, and in ascribing different abilities, attitudes, desires and personality traits to men and women (Agarwal 1997). For instance, food security is impacted by the women's perceived roles in regards to

gardening. The participants expressed their inability to garden based on their gender, citing that it was "not acceptable for women to garden" (I3:May15), or more specifically "it is not acceptable for a woman to do gardening without a man because there are more men" (I8:May17). This participant touched on the hierarchy of access by acknowledging that men get the opportunity to garden prior to women. The division of who may garden also existed spatially, as indicated by a participant who stated, "People in the city work for food, people in the country grow food to eat" (I4:May15). Even those participants enthusiastic to try gardening felt they needed a man's help (I5:May16), in particular for digging (I6:May16), because specifically "women cannot dig, [we] can only carry water" (I15:May19). These perceptions and relations are constituted by and help constitute practices and ideologies in the spatial interaction where women source their food, and are maintained through daily performances of social norms. Equally, a resistance is a performance that subverts predefined roles and aids in keeping roles fluid, dynamic and evolving with time. This resistance became evident through the actions of three participants who actively gardened, and the majority of the group stating they would be willing to garden without men but as a woman's organization, even though they acknowledged this would not be possible on an individual basis.

The remainder of this chapter will be dedicated to the examination of the four arenas by reviewing the data collected during the interviews, focus groups, and participant observation to inform each of the four research objectives previously identified. The codes and categories were developed based on grounded theory from responses collected. First, this chapter will review the participatory workshops in which the participants worked to answer their four research questions, and from which data was collected.

### 5.0.2 PAR Workshops

To achieve the ontological and epistemological perspective associated with feminist political ecology and PAR, focus group discussions (FGDs) were centred around data revealed by the participants and complemented with qualitative tools such as mapping, participant observation, guest speakers and field trips. The various FGDs are presented and discussed below:

FGD I : To initiate the process, semi-structured interviews were conducted. The data was summarized and presented to the participants in the first FGD. This was a critical stage that allowed the women to begin to discuss, recognize and articulate as a group their shared struggles. The responses from the surveys were deciphered by the women (for everyone's benefit), and lumped into codes and categories. The sorted data formed the basis for the next FGD and the beginning of 'factors' listed in the bargaining framework. This building of codes and categories kept in spirit with Charmaz's grounded theory.

FGD II : Categories revealed from the semi-structured interviews were again discussed, but this time the women were given the opportunity to discuss their impressions of the barriers that existed to food security and how things have changed over time. This activity gave them the opportunity to brainstorm without constraints. This exercise was fun and uplifting and allowed poor women, who are often constructed as lacking intelligence, to use their creativity and local 'lived' knowledge. From the discussion a number of research questions emerged, which were recorded for future workshops. These additional research questions are presented below, with English translations provided.

1. *Kouman ou fe pou komite a fa? (Kouman w fe yon kominite?)* How do you make a community? (NOTE: this question transpired from the recognition that they had few people to rely upon for food and is a common action item for Haitians).

2. *Kote nou jwen manje?* Where do we get our food?

3. *Kouman nou ka depanse mwens kob sou manje?* How can we spend less money on food?

4. *Kouman pou nou fe pou nou jwen yon solisyon sou kondisyon manje?* How are we going to make a solution to obtain food?

Based on these questions, an extensive discussion resulted and a plethora of provocative and thoughtful statements were brought forth by the participants. It was agreed that we would analyze these research questions in workshop sessions.

FGD III : Women were asked to brainstorm ideas to answer the question: "*Kouman w fe yon kominite?* How do we build a community?" Haitians are very familiar with organizing themselves into work parties, or *konbits*, so the outcome of this question was an action item: to build an organization, a natural response in Haitian culture. The women asked me to lead the organization, which I declined and reminded them that I would be returning to Canada and so for a sustainable organization they would need to lead themselves. However, a Centre staff member was present in the room and the event was retold to the Sister. The formation of an organization inadvertently challenged the authority of the Haitian Director of the Centre by working autonomously with the Centre's Canadian Director and bypassing the Sister. Eventually the Sister suggested that I had a hidden agenda of initiating my own NGO, which was followed by a series of events such as meetings mysteriously cancelled or disrupted, or meetings scheduled at the same time as the research group. It was my intention to adhere to the participatory nature of my research, and as such I would need to support the women's decision to build an independent organization.

The next two meetings, FGD IV and V, were focused upon designing the organization. The group determined the actual steps needed to strengthen their organization which included an organizational name, code of conduct, a constitution and objectives. The women decided upon an organizational name '*Fanm en Askyon*' (Women in Action), with the *objektiv: Tet an sanm pou changman* (objective: Unity for Change). A secretary was chosen and the women began to collect 5g (the equivalent of 13 cents US) from each member at every meeting. The women asked me to be treasurer of the funds but I again responded that my objective was to return to Canada and that they would need a sustainable solution and suggested a bank account. Mme Anton responded that she had never used a bank, and the other women concurred that they too had no knowledge of banking system. This lack of experience with a formal bank is an indicator that their socio-economic status had prevented them from gaining the necessary knowledge to navigate an institution which should be used to increase security and wealth. It is common for those in the formal employment sector to utilize the institutional banks.

To alleviate this lack of knowledge the women agreed to have the manager from Capital Bank come to discuss the different banking institutions available. In Cap Haitien there are formal and informal banking institutions present, some being less desirable than others. After the presentation three women volunteered to oversee the bank account and five women volunteered to collect the money and oversee the accounting.

FGD VI: During this focus group the participating women began to work upon their second research question. *Kote nou jwen manje?* Where do we get our food? The women broke into groups of six to discuss their ideas, each with a representative to present the group's ideas. From this discussion the women identified the various markets and the problems associated with them with regard to dirt, flies, trash and bargaining for good prices. Some discussion revolved around the last question of finding affordable food, and as the women exchanged knowledge about which market had the cheapest food and which day of the week fresh produce was delivered from the countryside. The groups noted that Haitian staples were not always available and were at times double the price of readily available imported staples. The conversation resulted in a spatial production in the rural food sources that supplied Cap Haitian and which constitute the food shed diagram presented in Chapter Four. This exchange of information demonstrated the benefit of being involved with an organization as valuable food knowledge was transferred to the less experienced new migrants and the younger members of the group. A mapping exercise was utilized to capture this information but due to the shear extent of the geographical area covered we decided to work as one large group at the blackboard. A diagram of rural places and the products these places were best known for was collected. In addition, the participants discussed what disrupts the food delivery system. Responses included poor roads, bad weather, seasonal variations, political and social unrest, and failed crops. Some participants reported that farmers no longer grow certain crops because people purchase inexpensive food imports in the markets.

In response to the question the women spoke about the different markets, street vendors, boutiques, the UCP, Bel Air Mission, the World Food Programme (WFP), family members, and relationships with men. They also recalled that children used to get food at school, and prior to migration they would grow food. This exercise lent itself well

to a mapping exercise since the spatial area was familiar to the women, part of their daily routine, and could be represented by differentiating physical markers. A discussion of street vendors prevailed and time was spent discussing what constituted healthy food, when to eat certain foods, what foods gave the body different benefits, and where they gained their knowledge concerning nutrition. Generally women reported that they gained nutritional knowledge through churches and schools and passed along in the form of songs. One discussion revolved around the quality of food in shopping markets. This conversation spilled over into examining the political economy of food production – local versus imported food, which is more nutritious, and how imports affected the country. One outspoken women participant who gardened and generally challenged gender norms also spoke against imported food. She recognized how imports damaged local agricultural production. She went as far as to suggest that Haitians should not purchase 'Miami rice' or other imports when they can afford to purchase local food. The women then discussed how to stretch their meagre incomes to meet their food needs, the difficulty of this problem and how they often went without food.

In FGD VII, question three was discussed: *Kouman nou ka depanse mwens kob sou manje?* How can we spend less money on food? The discussion of pricing differences, availability and delivery schedules of different markets was revisited. A suggestion emerged that the women buy in bulk as an organization and share the food. This idea was not adopted since they decided it would be too hard to divide the food evenly and the logistics of transporting the food would be difficult. It appears that the suggestion was rejected due to the perceived increase in labour. However, it might equally be based on the fear of conflict

The discussion turned to gardening. Two participants indicated that they were able to secure a portion of their food needs and then sell the remaining produce from their urban gardens. The other participants appeared more interested in this activity when they realized production sales could fit in with their commerce activities and identity. One of the home owning participants spoke about her failure at gardening, with both cows and floods killing her crops, which provoked a discussion on the difficulties of gardening. The participants' responses concurred with their lack of interest to the small urban

gardening plots viewed during participant observation. These attempts at gardening were clearly not of interest to the women due to their small scale and the inability to generate produce for commerce sales.

In FGD VIII, the question was discussed: *Kouman pou nou fe pou nou jwen yon solisyon sou kondisyon manje?* How are we going to make a solution to obtain food? The previous FGD had examined limited solutions for finding cheaper food and left gardening as the only promising option. To evaluate urban gardening as a solution outcome mapping (IDRCa 2003) was employed. The process required the use of two maps. Firstly, a conceptual map of the current situation (identified during FGD VI) was drawn on the blackboard with symbols and Creole words. Secondly, a map was drawn that depicted goals to be achieved. This approach was facilitated through a Stepping Stones diagram (see Flowerdew 2005; Wallace 2005). In a stepping stones diagram there is a depiction of 'where we are' on one side of the river, and 'where we wish to be' on the opposite side, with the steps, or action items, that are needed to get from one side of the river to the other. This Stepping Stones exercise helped to identify the issues, or steps, that needed to be addressed by the organization to be successful at gardening. The steps identified were: access to land in country or access to land in city, education and knowledge sharing, security from animals and people, money for seeds and tools, a water source and transportation costs. It became clear that the women were not interested in gardening just to feed their families but to sell the produce to increase their income. One participant thought tomato paste would be a profitable activity while another suggested processing grapefruit juice. Both activities would add value to the agricultural garden products. Clearly the women are able to evaluate opportunities to add to their basket of strategies to increase their food security.

The subsequent group sessions discussed the challenges and necessary sacrifices to peri-urban agriculture. We organized a research field trip to Foundation Vincent, an agricultural school in the heart of Cap Haitien, which allowed women to learn cropping and composting techniques. This trip was followed by a session with the Centre's agronomist to learn of the complexities of running a gardening cooperative. A second

field trip was arranged by the group to view a piece of agricultural land; unfortunately the land was too expensive.

During the group work, interviews and participant observation a recurring theme of obstacles due to class, age and gender arose. These obstacles included family responsibilities, work load, personal security, security of commerce goods, limited ability to garden due to gendered roles, and lack of access to personal banking and loans. In addition the women expressed receiving a general lack of respect within all four of the arenas, including from the staff and Haitian Director at the UCP, by male sexual partners, a lack of equality demonstrated by the church and the police force and demonstrated by the lack of government support. In reviewing the research and noticing these trends I suggested that we invite speakers from Association Femmes Soleil d'Haiti, (AFASDA) and Human Rights Watch to come and speak to the group. The women agreed. The expert from AFASDA spoke about women in Haitian culture and what support systems are in place for abused women, including the social norms that keep women subordinate in their own culture. The presenter from Human Rights Watch covered the rights of women, legislated law, and how to use the law to protect themselves.

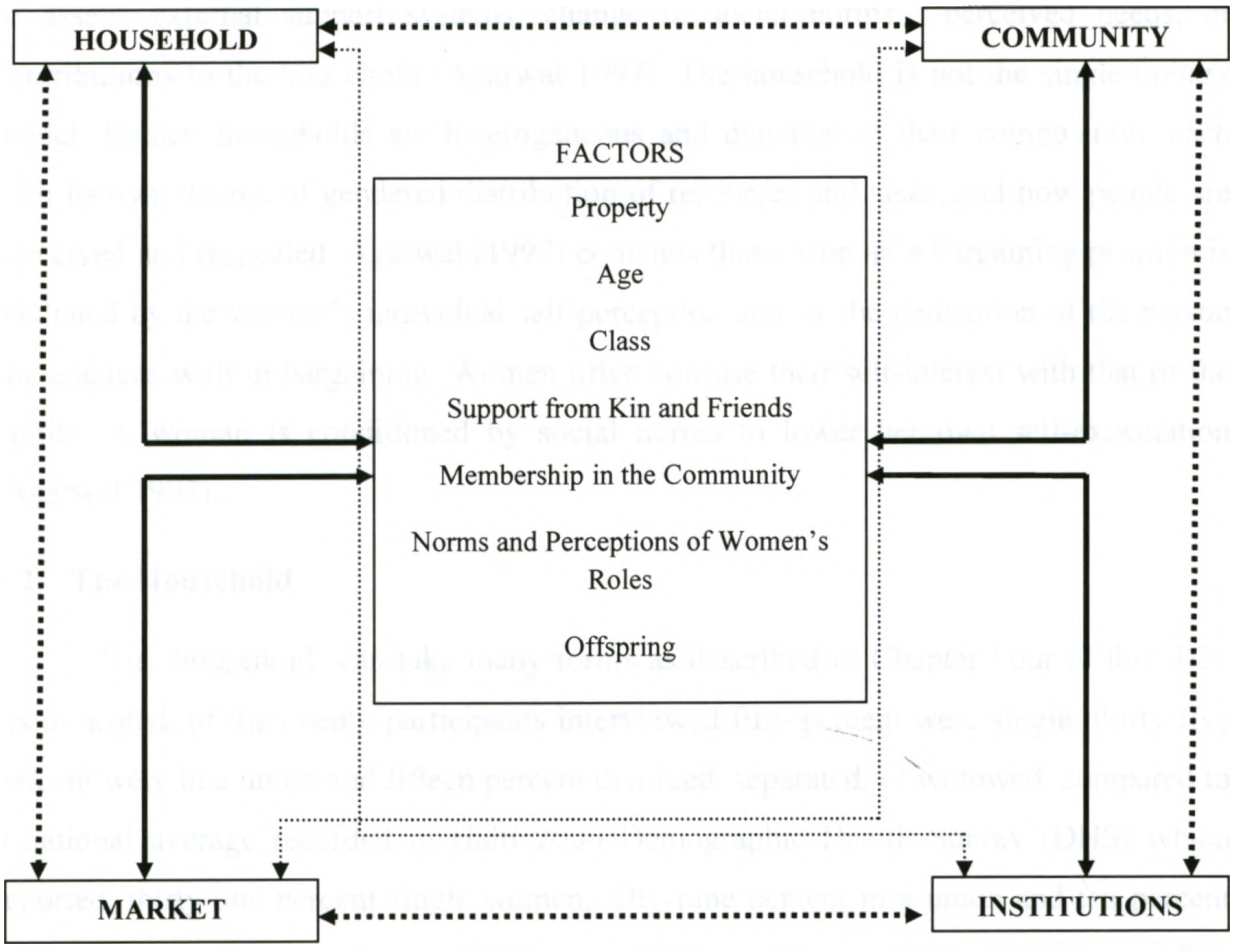
### 5.1 Bargaining Framework

Upon reviewing the research I was able to apply the data gathered to the four arenas identified within the bargaining framework: household, community, markets and institutions. These arenas developed from the work of the participants during FGD VI and from information gathered during semi-structured interviews as spaces where food procurement occurred. The conceptual framework was drawn from Agarwal (1997) for the purpose of understanding social and spatial constraints of food security. In each of these four spaces cooperation and conflict occurred during the bargaining process. This theoretical approach assumes that conflict arises when individuals are trying to advance their own differing interests; meanwhile, cooperation transpires when an individual's own interests are furthered by cooperating. It is here where gendered roles are revealed as a hindrance or an asset in the bargaining process to claim entitlements. Each arena influences a women's bargaining power in all other arenas either by reinforcing gendered roles or providing space for counter-hegemonic discourses.

## Concept Map 5.1

## Urban Arenas for the Constitution of Gender Identity:

### Factors Likely to Affect Bargaining for Food Security




The factors that affect bargaining were derived from the FGDs and semi-structured interviews and are listed in the Concept Map, and explained in the descriptions of each of the four arenas. These factors came in part from the coding and categorizing during a FGD with the participants and in part from my own reflection after exiting the field. Each arena in turn influences the factors by constructing female identity and the performance of the gendered roles in the other arenas. For instance, a woman perceived as employable by only the informal market has fewer income generation options and is unable to contribute as well to her household income. This structural inequality in employment reduces her bargaining position for food with her housemates or husband.

These unequal roles and resulting bargaining positions materialize in a gendered division of resources and power. In other words, women have a lesser ability to shape and determine the political, social, economic and ecological environment in which they live, or to regulate the actions of others, with regards to their own food security. Exchange entitlements depend upon ownership of individual endowments, control of family income or assets, external support systems, change in social norms, perceived needs, or contributions to the household (Agarwal 1997). The household is not the single unitary model. Rather, households are heterogeneous and dynamic in their composition, each with its own degree of gendered distribution of resources and tasks, and how people are perceived and respected. Agarwal (1997) contends that a woman's bargaining position is mediated by the woman's individual self-perception and by the perception of the person she engages with in bargaining. Women often confuse their self-interest with that of the family. A woman is conditioned by social norms to lower her own self-expectation (Agarwal 1997).

## 5.2 The Household

The 'household' can take many forms as described in Chapter Four (Table 4.2). As indicated, of the twenty participants interviewed fifty percent were single, thirty-five percent were in a union and fifteen percent divorced, separated, or widowed, compared to a national average recorded in Haiti 2000 Demographic Health Survey (DHS) which reported, thirty-one percent single women, fifty-nine percent in a union and ten percent divorced, separated or widowed (Michel Cayemittes et. al and Macro International Inc. 2003). This small group of women seemed to experience less stable living arrangements with men then the general population, and is likely the reason they have approached the Centre looking for assistance. All but one woman cared for children, and the number of children being cared for in the household increased with the age of the women, with seven of the women caring for children other than their own. Both married and single women reported that not all their biological children had the same fathers.

Intra-household bargaining occurs between the members of the same household. The outcomes of the bargaining process are affected by the relative bargaining power of each household member, with a balance being struck between cooperation and non-

cooperation. These outcomes, in turn, affect a woman's food security. In addition to food, women bargain over pooled income, goods, childcare, sleeping arrangements, and household chores among other things. Bargaining between the household members is influenced and affected by one's entitlement position. In this exploratory study exchange entitlements affect how well women bargain or cooperate within a household, community, market place, or institution. If usual survival strategies fail, a food insecure woman must rely on desperate measures to meet her household food needs.

Exchange entitlements depend upon ownership of individual endowments, control of family income or assets, external support systems, change in social norms, perceived needs, or contributions to the household (Agarwal 1997). The household is not the single unitary model as presented in Chapter Two, in Nash's 1950 game theory model rather households are heterogeneous and dynamic in their composition, each with their own degree of gendered distribution of resources and tasks, and how people are perceived and respected.

Agarwal (1997) contends that a woman's bargaining position is mediated by the woman's individual self-perception and by the perception of the person she engages with in bargaining. Women often confuse their self-interest with that of the family. A woman is conditioned by social norms to lower her own self-expectation (Agarwal 1997).

A woman may believe that she does not contribute well to the household, and these values can become internalized, so that when she enters any of the four arenas she is entering with the belief that she does not have a strong bargaining position, in comparison to men. For instance, young female women who are treated with disrespect by their housemates (one participant who was sexually abused by her landlord and another who was treated like as a *restavec* by her siblings) often adopt a poor self-perception of worth which in turn affects the strength portrayed during bargaining at the UCP, in the market, or elsewhere. This chapter elucidates self-perception or self-worth and bargaining power as a marker of position in the four arenas. Self-perception plays a large role in beliefs about one's needs and contributions, the pursuit of self-interest, and the outcomes of bargaining. Due to pervasive gender inequalities that are reinforced through social norms, women often fail to perceive their own self-interest in comparison to men.

### 5.2.1 Urban Women's Factors used for Bargaining in the Household Arena

The interplay between factors and bargaining outcomes are complex. As Agarwal (1997) explains bargaining, power can be seen in a person's assets, and to some degree a person's support systems, social norms, perceptions about contributions and needs. Secondly, some resources are both factors to be used in bargaining and need to be bargained for themselves (1997). For instance, access to land must first be negotiated prior to it being added to the woman's list of assets that strengthen her food security. Yet, bargaining for land is restricted by a woman's lack of access to bank loans, substantial income production, or her position as actively participating in agriculture in comparison to her brothers.

The women participants recognized land ownership, or access to agricultural land, as strengthening their position since they could eat from their garden, or sell garden produce. The income thus generated would allow them to contribute to the well-being of the household and strengthened the woman's perceived bargaining position. Production of food was recognized as a source of food, a method to save money (reduced food purchases) and a method to generate income, thereby strengthening their food security. Land ownership is the first step to home ownership. Women participants recognized home ownership as an important asset, giving them security and reducing their monthly costs (rent). For one participant land for a home was ranked a higher priority than using land for a garden.

The bargaining position in the household could be strengthened by the following factors: ownership and control of assets, income generating activities, reproduction of children and the household, and sexual acquiescence to men. Additionally, ones bargaining position can be strengthened by support networks of friends and family in both the rural and urban setting, support from NGOs and church missions or through social perceptions about needs, contributions, and social norms. These factors aided in meeting their household and individual needs. What weakened the women's bargaining position were social norms and their beliefs and perceptions regarding those norms.

### 5.2.2 Household Labour and Income Generation

The participants' labour was both an asset and a liability for improving their food security. The women participants are considered responsible for food and household production. It was reported that men are unlikely to complete domestic chores. In fact, women reported leaving small children with older siblings rather than the fathers. Over a four year period I spent twenty-two weeks in Cap Haitian involved with the operation of the Centre. Of the hundreds of children enrolled in the nutrition program I only witnessed three fathers arrive with malnourished or sick children. As reported by Agarwal (1997), when a woman reproduces the household her contributions are undervalued and her labour is considered unskilled. The participants agreed with this perception which has manifested itself into a social norm. One participant spoke about how women are undervalued at home and treated with disrespect (I4:May15). The Human Rights Watch representative, a Haitian women, agreed and in her opinion thought that the home was the most important place for the reproduction of the negative construction of female identity (I35:May23). AFASDA stated, "Women are sexual victims by their partners. They return because they don't have the economic means to take care of themselves and their children so they stay in abusive relationships" (I36: May22).Women carry the burden of family labour with little help from their male partners, and this performance by both genders solidifies a social norm.

In a bargaining situation, one's likelihood of choosing non-cooperation is directly related to the strength of one's fall-back position (Agarwal 1997). However, with little education or income generating potential, and their household labour considered unskilled, they are as Agarwal (1997) reminds us, perceived as and perceived by themselves as, having a weak bargaining position. With little bargaining power, non-cooperation could translate into a loss of entitlements in terms of intra-household resource distribution. As experienced by one participant, with no income to contribute to the family, she was treated as a *restavec* and denied food (I14: May19). With women's household labour perceived as unskilled they are at risk of gender-related deprivation in terms of an equal share of food resources, medical care, education, access to water and respect of their human rights, in comparison to men and boys. Gender defines perceptions about one's worth and abilities and this perception materializes in the distribution of

resources. As expressed by AFASDA, "Haiti is a masculine society and women live in discrimination which is the foundation of the society and upon which the nation is built. Women suffer the most under it; women don't have rights and opportunities as men. Women accept the functioning of this political system; even up to the present, society gives women a hard time, even though the laws are there to protect them. The problem is in the process of healing" (I36: May22). The interviewee was referring to the historical and current experience of being a Haitian. This theme, and the need for healing, was also expressed by one participant (I20: May21), however, more often resignation to the daily challenges rather than healing was expressed.

### 5.2.3 Self Perception of Worth and Dangerous Choices

Participants from *Fanm en Aksyon* often commented on their resignation to what God had given them. This public performance was a face saving mechanism to cover feelings of neglect and humiliation and to appear cooperative. When discussing access to food the participants commented frequently that they could only buy what they could afford or what was available. This comment was delivered with a shrug and voice intonation that did not reveal anger or defiance but resignation. Others vocalized their resignation by commenting, "I thought people would help but they didn't, but I am not angry, I accept God's way" (I20: May21) and another stated, "I do not feel discouraged, someday the Lord will help me" (I13: May18). When speaking about choosing a partner, one woman participant remarked that, "I choose where my hands could reach" (I6: May16). She equated her perceived self-worth to settling for a partner which she considered her equal and not beyond her social position. This participant often borrowed money for food and commented "sometimes I see myself as the lowest person in the world" but "I am not too picky; I take what I can" (I6: May16).

These feelings of low self-worth sometimes translated into dangerous choices. For instance, one young nineteen year old participant expressed feelings of humiliation which prevented her from revealing to Centre's staff that she was living with complete strangers who demanded sex for shelter. She weighed the humiliation of sexual abuse in the household against the humiliation of divulging her predicament to the Director of the Centre, Sr. Grace, her only source of food for herself and her child. A woman's needs are

perceived to be synonymous with the family needs, while men live independently of the family. Similarly, as reported by Dakkak (2007) who conducted health research with women from the UCP, a woman will deny health care, dignity and personal security in order to ensure that the family food needs are met. Women balance the gains and losses of the family as one unit. This young participant was an example of a woman who had internalized a low self-worth and performed the role of sacrificing her own health in the space of the household to meet the family needs. This decision materializes and sustains the social norm, and pattern of behaviour, that a woman's needs are synonymous with the family. Through upholding this social norm action she increased her own vulnerability.

### 5.2.4 Reproducing Roles

Women at an early age become responsible for household chores. The women reported that the gendered roles of boys and girls at age seven or eight are differentiated; girls will begin to perform household chores, while boys generally do not share the same gendered responsibilities and may use their time outside of school for play and social activities. Only one woman participant reported that she had trained her boys to perform house hold chores (I17: May20). This woman did not have female children, but she was very gender progressive in the sense that she was willing to contest social norms that disadvantaged her. More about her contestation of norms can be found in the urban gardening section. The other participants benefitted from having older female children to share the household responsibilities, thus freeing the women's time for income generating activities. By training their female children to perform household chores, the participants sustained the social norms that household reproduction was a woman's responsibility. Through the exploitation of her female child's labour a woman was reproducing the dominant narrative or social norm, because it was to her benefit. When a woman's workload was reduced she could spend more time on income generating activities, thereby increasing her bargaining position within the household. However, the parental benefits from having children did not stop at household chores. Older children, once working, were expected to contribute to their parents' household income and well-being, whether children lived at home, or nearby, or whether they lived in another city or out of country (I30: June7).

Two women had strong family relationships with an extended family that depended on mutual reciprocity[30], in other words all members of the family would be obligated to contribute in some fashion to food collection. These exchanges sometimes involved parents with which the participants did not live, but more often with cousins, siblings and occasionally friends with whom they lived. These exchanges are not gifts, but rather contributions to the household which in turn increased their bargaining power in food redistribution. One nineteen year old member of *Femme en Aksyon* lived with her siblings and their husbands. This young woman had little to contribute to the household income or food stores and as such, was treated as a *restavec*. In part due to her age, this young woman had few helpful social networks outside of the immediate family unit and a poor bargaining position due to her lack of endowments or ability to contribute with material items such as food. Her contribution of unskilled labour was undervalued, leaving her food insecure, since she ate last and little in comparison to the other family members. She described eating at her house as "survival of the fittest" (I14: May19). The older women who headed their households did not experience this discrimination and in one case the participant had taken in children outside of her biological children to help with household chores.

Social norms dictated that women are responsible for the reproduction of the household which included being responsible for the household finances. Yet, their responsibility to the household limited their mobility and job options, in other words, time spent reproducing the household was time lost generating significant income. To make matters worse, social norms dictated that women are better suited for the informal market rather than more lucrative formal employment. To accomplish their household responsibilities and not violate social norms, women partake in marketing, or 'commerce', activities in the informal marketplace. The women are conditioned to lower their expectations as contributors to the labour market, yet at the same time are responsible for generating income to run the household. It is an impossible dilemma. This social norm- that women are skilled for the informal market- is internalized, embodied, and the women materialised as commerce women, with lower incomes and higher food

[30] Reciprocity is a way of defining people's informal exchange of goods and labour; a relation of mutual dependence.

insecurity than if they participated in formal labour. These social norms leave the women dependent on male income earners to augment the household finances. This issue will be discussed at greater length in the informal and formal market section.

### 5.2.5 Sexual Acquiescence to Men

From my field research it appears that the traditional social envelope that monitored the behaviour in rural communities has largely dissipated in urban Haiti with this group of participants. As told by a woman in the study group, "Women used to have children in order to get support from men, but now the men are resisting, and this is becoming worse" (I8:May17). In Cap Haitian, for this research group, the rules of family farm model had disappeared, men did not regularly provide for their children, and women were not expected to be sexually faithful to an absent partner. These women are able to change partners and as a result have many children with different men. One female participant expressed:

> Young women who have no choices find a man and he will put conditions on her and she will need to sleep with him. Sometimes the woman gets pregnant on purpose so that the man will take care of them, sometimes the man will say the child is not theirs because they were having sex for money. Then the woman will look for a new partner (I6:May16).

Sexual relations in the hopes of long term conjugal relationships are sought but are often not maintained, rather, sexual relations for cash with men that are known to the women are more frequent. These relations are often long term although do not involve a formal marital union. The sustained use of a woman's gendered capital is employed as a survival strategy. As stated by one woman participant (I12, May18): "Women use their bodies so that they can provide for themselves." She acknowledges that women embody their gendered capital as a survival strategy to attract Haitian males, thereby sustaining many long term relationships to accumulate cash to sustain the urban family. The household economy and the internal food trade remain a feminized space, yet the rules that contain that space are altered. This insight will be discussed at length in Chapter Six.

With the erosion of familial and social networks in urban Haiti, women are subjected to high rates of violence. Schwartz contends this urban violence occurs because of two reasons. Firstly, in rural Haiti women have greater income than their male counterparts due being the sellers of the husband's agricultural produce and keeping control the income. Secondly, in the rural setting extended families were intact and were able to protect women from violence (Schwartz 2009). In the urban setting, the ability of women to retain control of the family finances remains. When asked if men pressure her for money, one woman participant responded, "that women don't give men money, men give women money" (I4: May15). Mme Jeanne agreed that "women are not pressured by men or husbands to give them money, this is not the way in Haiti" (I15: May19). The outspoken women's group, AFASDA, a Haitian run NGO in Cap Haitien, worked to change the cultural mindset of women's position in Haiti, through education, challenging social norms and government legislation, and by aiding women who desired to leave abusive relationships. This position made AFASDA a target of violence and was frowned upon by the representatives of the Catholic Church interviewed, who believed families should work to stay together (I32:, May 20). Society enforced people's obligations and social practices, including those that were harmful.

Being excluded from formal labour and more dependent on men creates the need for a survival strategy that includes sexual acquiescence to men to access men's wealth. Women reported that in times of desperation some women may make the decision to use sex to get food or money. Although no women revealed this to be her strategy, women spoke about knowing other women that employed this method to secure needs. As a participant noted: "I do commerce but I know a lot of women who need to have sex for food" (I11:May18). Another particpant concurred with this view: "Yes, woman use their bodies so that they can provide for themselves" (I13:May18). While interviewing AFASDA, they asserted that poor women without options will find a man to feed and house her. Some men then use this opportunity to sexually abuse the women by inviting their friends over to use her body. Being a poor and food insecure woman in urban Haiti can be a humiliating and dangerous experience. By constructing women as responsible for household labour and employable only by the informal market, social norms created a

series of events that keep women food insecure and in a vulnerable position. Women essentially lose control of the construction of their identity.

### 5.2.6 Social Norms, Motherhood and the Changing Roles

Currently, societal pressure is exerted upon women to become mothers. As revealed during a FGD VI, women in Haiti are called Madam once they have given birth. This change in designation occurs regardless of their age or marital status and this status is directly related to childbirth. Furthermore, women without children were seen as flawed and at times called names (I14:May19; I10:May17). The participants of *Femme en Aksyon* expressed the benefits of being partnered with a male. One participant described the ways in which she tried to draw on these gendered norms: "I hooked up with a man because I hoped he would take care of my food. We were living together, then I got pregnant and I was glad because then he would be obligated to stay" (I6:May16). If the man stays then her bargaining power with the community and the market place has improved. She understands these dynamics, the linking between arenas, and the benefits accrued by her if she maintains the role of producer of children.

Haitian society shaped women to believe their self-worth is synonymous with their fertility (Schwartz 2009; I4:May15; I6:May16). This emphasis on fertility left women with the expectation that their needs will be met by the children's father. Children represent social security and having children is used by women as a survival strategy with the goal of economic contributions both in the form of cash and material resources from the father. The participants revealed that often women became pregnant in the hopes that the father would provide food and other material needs, and indeed the women reported fathers and the father's families as a reliable source of food.

However, participants remarked on the uncertain, changing nature of this social norm, with today many men not living up to the expectation. Men that were interviewed often complained that women were only interested in men for money and food, expressing their disapproval of this prospect and their hesitancy to embrace this role. A participant who, when asked if children were a strategy to access food, responded, "Yes, yes, yes but the men are resisting- and this is becoming worse" (I3:May15). This

temporal change was remarked upon by another participant as she noted, not all women received support from their children's fathers:

> Only an older sister of mine took care of me when I became pregnant. Sometimes the girls have no one and they think that the father will help them if they have children—food, money, housing. The father has an obligation to take care of you and the children. The mother benefitted because she lives in the house that the father provided for the woman. [In the city] it is common for the father's family to pick up the responsibility of the father when he does not fulfill the obligation. (I8:May17).

The participants expressed a persistent perception that a woman's role is reproducing the family – including the family finances – yet with the expectation that men would contribute to the process. In reality, men were often absent in this arrangement; yet, women would cling to this strategy even though it was unreliable, in part because of the social pressure to bear children, and in part because they had few other options. During one focus group meeting the women were articulating the skills and knowledge they brought to the organization, *Femme en Aksyon*. While some brought business skills, gardening skills and some even land, one woman announced that "she could produce children." At that moment the ideology that a woman's abilities were synonymous to the reproduction of the household materialized. This participant was verbally reproducing the discourse of oppressive constructed social norms, not a revolutionary discourse. Yet, when the participant expressed herself she laughed as she spoke; it was an uneasy laugh that revealed she was not happy with the status quo, but as a woman living with few entitlements and the burden of a powerful social norm that controlled her behaviour and which she found difficult to subvert.

The participants revealed that women in the urban setting have attempted to construct gender-based livelihoods founded on traditional male-female social norms in a family unit. The family unit, however, was based on an agricultural livelihood and has suffered in the new food economy as men are less dependent upon the family unit for survival while women remain subordinate to the social norm that they are solely responsible for the reproduction of the household. Gender relations and the new political economy influence and shape the response to this new family structure. Women negotiate

old traditional systems and gendered responsibilities in an often unsuccessful attempt to meet their food needs.

### 5.3 The Community

Individuals belong to many different communities. From Gregory et al. (2009:103), a community is "a group of people who share common culture, values and/or interests, based on social identity and/or territory, and who have some means of recognizing, and (inter)acting upon, these commonalities." This definition is supported by Agarwal (1997), but is contested by Joseph (2002), as he contends community refers more to the exercise of production and consumption within capitalism. A community may be spatially located, as in a neighbourhood or city, or temporally located for events or projects, or through generations such as professional and working cohorts. A community may also be ideologically situated as in a religious community, for economic purposes as in the food distribution system, or through shared labour as in a konbit. Each of these communities contain expectations of trust and cooperation and shared goals or objectives. Generally a person is a member of several communities. One neighbourhood may contain several smaller communities, individuals that gather for their own like interests. Cooperation and conflict during the bargaining process occurs within these communities and as Agarwal (1997:29) states, "It can be argued that an individual is likely to cooperate with the community insofar as it brings her/him greater economic, social or political gain than possible otherwise." Communities can offer support when an individual or family has financial, emotional or security needs, such as funerals, weddings, finding employment, during political manifestations, or theft. Membership in a community is important, as these benefits are not afforded to non-members.

Within communities bargaining occurs. Depending on her endowments (including food resources), a woman's bargaining power will be successful, or not. Depending on a woman's food security a woman may opt out of a community when her obligations to that community exceed her benefits, as demonstrated by the women forfeiting access to the microcredit program when enduring humiliation outweighed the benefits (I18:May20). Of the women interviewed forty percent reported not storing food while the remainder generally kept easy to stored, non-perishable items like rice and plantain. To

procure food, a woman would still require strategies to ensure adequate entitlements to survive, economically, socially and outside of the community she is forfeiting.

### 5.3.1 Social Networks

Social networks can be critical during times of need. These relationships are built over time and with individuals or groups. These relationships build moral responsibilities, or a moral economy, to one another and to some degree are relied upon as an endowment that may be used for an exchange entitlement for securing food. Social networks are spatially concentrated and refer to kinships, friendships and communities that are the main medium for interaction and through which information flows, and are a core element in a social structure (Gregory et al. 2009). Thus, social networks are also conduits for reproducing or resisting social norms. Social networks that the women of *Fanm en Aksyon* relied upon, and built, consisted of urban family and friends, rural family and friends, fathers of their children, families of their children's fathers, neighbours, other men with whom they have had sexual relationships, and other commerce women in the market place. Networks also occurred in the institutional settings of the NGOs, churches, schools, and our research group. The women of this group did not have a consistent pattern of social networks that could be used to describe the entire group. Networks were spatially concentrated or ideologically situated. They could overlap. For instance, the market was both the workplace and a food source, or a school was a place of education or a food source for children. Migrant women come to the city for various reasons. Their social networks, which served as their social safety nets, were disrupted by death, change in family members, loss of access to land and when they left their kinship and social ties behind to come to the city. Three women reported having a relative or friend upon which to rely upon for a short time once arriving to the city, however most women reported knowing no one.

Sixteen of the women twenty women interviewed migrated from the countryside. They migrated individually or as families mediated by loss of access to land or homes, family break up, death of parents, or to attend secondary school. The women reported that presently, family and friends in the countryside have greater needs than urban dwellers. Four of the women commented that if they were to visit their rural communities

they would take food with them for family and friends, however travelling home was expensive and did not occur often. Mme Jean was the only woman to reveal rural networks as a food source. "Yes, once a year I go to the country. Sometimes I come back with food but right now it is planting season, so there is not much to bring back so I would not go. My mother does not have a garden but food is cheaper in the countryside" (I15:May19). Seasonal patterns influenced this participant's decision to rely on social networks in the countryside as a food source. None of the other fifteen women considered their rural social network of friends, family or land as a source to access food, however they did express their obligation to return home to care for sick and dying family members. These social networks were important to maintain for times of crisis as demonstrated by the Jan 12, 2010 earthquake. Post quake over five hundred thousand people shifted to communities across the country where familiar or social connections aided in survival (USAID 2010).

### 5.3.2 Sharing in the New Political Economy

The better established women of *Fanm en Aksyon*, those who had more stable housing (owned their own homes or stable living arrangements) and had older children (that could help with household chores thus freeing time for income generation), reported that they shared their food with neighbours. However, no one reported receiving food from neighbours. This sharing indicated that some older women had accumulated endowments and entitlements, and now were able to invest some of these assets. By sharing with neighbours it could be argued that the women were adding to their portfolio of assets by building social networks which they could rely upon in the future (see Agarwal et. al 2006). This logic is supported by claim that, "things always get worse in Haiti" (I22: May21). However this group of women also remarked that they were sharing with people that were no better off than themselves (I2:May15; I19: May20), thus more research is needed to establish the reasons for sharing in the context described. Younger, more vulnerable women, those with frequent food shortages and non-stable housing (living with different friends and families for short periods of time), did not have the food resources to share, indicating their vulnerability and food insecurity.

One participant, a thirty-nine year old woman with four children, described a change in sharing habits: "No, [today] families do not get together to share the responsibility of food for the household. Back in 1983 the food was plentiful and neighbours would get together to share food" (I20:May21). This woman had migrated from the countryside in 1983. As she explained, "It was easier in the countryside because there were water sources like faucets, free water, but in the city I have to pay. Food is more difficult in the city." When my father was alive he had a garden and we had a lot of food. I lost everything because when he died there was no one to till the ground. Before he died he was sick and we sold a bit of garden land to get by and for medicine. When he died we sold the last little bit of garden land to pay for the funeral" (I20:May21). Another participant concurred that a change in sharing had occurred, "I have fewer people to rely on, things are harder on everyone. The cost of living has increased." (I8:May17). Like the first woman, she had lost ties, due to death, with family members who had supported her. A further participant revealed that once their house burnt down they could not afford to rebuild. "We still had the land but we had to move to the city" (I6:May16). Rural agriculture was not enough to support any of these families and for some the land had to be liquidated to cover the cash shortage. The first participant also identified her gender as a barrier to continue gardening without her father. For some of the participants, the new political economy reduced farm income to the point where a family's needs could no longer be met. The urban market place has been reoriented as the focal point of the women's lives, horizontal social exchange arrangements are eliminated, and vertical and hierarchical networks and market relations predominate. Sharing between neighbours is replaced with individual survival as families live too close to food insecurity to aid one another.

Two women participants both remarked upon the retraction of state support. The participants stated that in the early 1980s, under the Duvalier regime, there was free water piped to almost every house and the streets and city were well maintained and clean. By the end of the Duvalier regime the infrastructure had fallen into disrepair and today the women pay two gourds for a five gallon bucket of un-potable water. These women remarked on their increased vulnerability fomented by the loss of family members and the retraction of the state's willingness and ability to provide basic services in the city.

The retraction of the state installed by structural adjustment was marked by a reduction in health, and education spending (Farmer 2003). The women clarified how the new political economy had degraded Haiti's ability to invest in its population through reduced feeding programs in schools and the reduced infrastructure in their community, such as schools, water, sanitation and road repairs. The women also commented that farmers had reduced cropping due to imported staples in the local markets. These changes negatively impacted the participants' food security and health. Neoliberal tenets imposed by structural adjustment have placed priority on the market over the physical environment and human capital.

To examine the food security experiences of those beyond that of the of *Femme en Aksyon*, men were also interviewed. An agronomist, M. G, who was in a wealthier economic position in comparison to the participants indicated that he could rely on his neighbours, "Not often do I go without food, sometimes it would be for a few days, but often people will help each other" (I23:June5). M. G was in a position of being able to reciprocate someone's generosity and so was comfortable with depending on people. His education, class and gender allowed him to garner greater wages, although employment was intermittent, thus he was confident that he would be able to reciprocate at some point. A similar statement was recorded from a landowning farmer, M. R., as he explained his neighbours do share food with him, however, "Sometimes a person can give you food through a neighbour and the food can be poisoned. Be careful of your enemies. I politely take the food and then put it in a plastic bag and dispose of it" (I24:May24). The Haitian culture is complex, and not all social network connections are beneficial. Although these two men reported relying upon social networks for food frequently, the women of *Femme en Aksyon* did not take advantage of the reciprocal nature of gift giving, but saved this possible food source for a time of crisis. Humiliation prevented one participant from sharing her food resources with neighbours. She revealed, "You don't trade food with neighbours because they will know when you are out of food, neighbours are for hello and goodbye only" (I2:May15). This participant was the only woman who had a steady, but meagre, income as a cook. This economic security allowed her the luxury of balancing humiliation and pride against need in her bargaining strategy.

## 5.4 The Markets

In this section I will discuss three types of markets: markets for food purchases, formal employment markets and informal employment markets. These markets intersect with each other. The space of the food market was also a space for the labour market. The food market refers to locations where women could source food and included the large central market, the smaller neighbourhood markets, the neighbourhood boutiques, and the street vendors which serve prepared food and were the spaces where cash was exchanged for food. The employment markets refer to both formal and informal spaces of employment where labour was exchanged for cash.

The women's ability to bargain in the markets was mediated by gendered norms. In the informal shopping markets, thirteen of the participants bargained both as commerce sellers and buyers; for these women the market had a dual purpose. Only one woman worked in formal employment as a cook at an NGO. Many Haitian women are business women; it is a learned performance, a skill that is deemed an important social norm for many Haitian women. They must learn the bargaining performance to increase their income and to stretch meagre dollars to ensure food security. However, simultaneously the public performance reinforces the construction of their own identities. The ability of a woman to bargain in the market is affected by her age, class, education and gender.

Women who participate in markets must learn the language skills, attitudes and values, the process of which was referred to by Godoy et al. (2005) as an 'urban acculturation'. The lessons are passed from one generation to the next through social networks, but women migrants new to the city, who have lost their networks, are in a precarious position. The younger participants admitted they had difficulty with bargaining and must learn through observation, and trial and error. The women attempt to contest their gendered position relative to the market vendors, but age, class and social networks influence the women's ability to exercise bargaining skills. One nineteen-year-old single mother expressed her experience: "Making prices is difficult. I am young and the older women in the market harass me" (I7:May16). The experience of class divisions

were detailed by another single mother, "I live beside the market so all the women know that I am poor and they give me a hard time because they know I don't have a lot of money" (I12:May18). Successful commerce women physically embody the necessary oral and body language (word choice, voice inflection, physical posture, eye contact, clothing) of the market place to assert dominance in the bartering process. The less skilled women are less successful in the bartering process. As observed during fieldwork, this learned performance successfully contests and resists the gendered roles of age and class, to allow women to successfully stretch the household income by achieving better market prices.

All of the women interviewed purchased food for their households from four main food sources: the central market, their local neighbourhood markets, street vendors and in times of crises the neighbourhood boutiques. These women were not able to access supermarkets or restaurants due to their socio-economic class. The women favoured the central market due to its cheap prices but distance prevented most from exercising this choice, leaving the participants to shop at neighbourhood markets where prices were higher. A participant who frequented both the central market and the market in her neighbourhood explains:

> The central market brings the food from the external producers. The smaller markets buy from the central market and so the prices are higher. Sometimes people cannot afford the car ride so they are forced to buy at the smaller markets (I2:May15).

Although the women preferred to shop at the central market because of selection and price, it was not necessarily a satisfactory shopping experience. The following remarks from the participants indicated their level of dissatisfaction with the central market experience:

> "Cleanliness [is] an issue in the market" (I10:May17).
> "In the market – it is not clean, it is dirty, there are flies, the quality is poor" (I2:May15).
> "I don't like the food, because the quality is poor—old, dirty with dust" (I3:May15).
> "Microbes are in the trash, which is right beside the food, it is dangerous" (I9:May19).
> "In the market they throw things everywhere" (I12:May18).

> "Gotten worse because the people in the markets sit next to trash and it is not clean. I would shop somewhere else if I had the money" (I19:May20).

The supermarket was considered a desirable place to shop due to the cleanliness and the organized stock. As a participant explained, "The closed supermarkets are better quality, but I cannot shop in those stores due to money" (I18:May20). These women, due to their economic status, needed to buy food of lesser and questionable quality. They perceived that their health was at risk through exposure to microbes and reduced nutritional quality. Women commented that if they had more resources that they would improve their nutrition. Comments recorded included, "I would eat balanced nutrition instead of cereal" (I19:May20). A participant indicated, "We never go without food, but we may not eat what we should" (I19:May16). Lack of income determined that the women chose basic food over food that could provide a balanced and more nutritious diet, or even food simply for enjoyment. As revealed by an additional participant, "Sometimes I buy what is good for the body not what I want" (I19:May20) and from another, "We eat for survival not for pleasure" (I20:May21).

When the women were experiencing food shortages they would use their known social networks with vendors to buy on credit. A participant explained, "When I go to the market what I find is what I buy. I can only buy what my money allows, sometimes I pay for my food another day" (I3:May15) and by a woman participant, "Everyday I buy food because of lack of money and sometimes on credit" (I19:May20). Women occasionally would meet their needs by borrowing money from other commerce women in their social network, or money lenders. A further participant indicated, "I have borrowed money from the water and lottery people to buy food" (I6:May16). The participants indicated that they must be careful who they borrow money from because some charged high interest or demanded sex if they could not repay. Women participants were forced to stretch a meagre income to meet their household food needs thereby affecting the quality and nutritional value of their food choices, and ultimately their health.

Street vendors provided another purchased food source. Some women never ate from the street vendors and prefer only to eat at home because they felt the quality (nutritional and cleanliness) was better. Others ate from street vendors when they did not

have food at home. Young mothers that I interviewed frequented the street vendors more often. Mothers reported that teenaged children ate meals at home but sometimes grabbed snacks – such as fried plantain and chicken on the way to school (I19:May20, I15:May19). One woman participant, who sold fried plantain as her commerce activity, would eat plantain snacks and allow her children to eat the plantain as well (I13:May18). A more recent migrant from Sophia, she complained, "We snack more in the city. We eat worse in the city—eating food that tastes good but not healthy for us" (I13:May16). During home visits and market tours I observed that street vendors generally sold fried food, confirming the women's remarks concerning vendors being an unhealthy food choice as opposed to the rice and vegetables cooked by the women at home.

The final source of purchased food was the neighbourhood boutiques. These boutiques were small shops containing basic food necessities as well as soda, candy, cell phone cards and other items. The family operated boutiques were located in the entrances of family homes, sometimes a large inventory would be held and separated from the rest of the home with partitions. These boutiques were accessed by the women only in times of great need, for instance when it was hard to reach the other markets or the markets were not opened during a flood or protest. The prices were very expensive at these home boutiques, higher than the central or neighbourhood markets, or the street vendors; higher prices were able to be charged due to the convenient location in the neighbourhoods.

### 5.4.1 Spatial Constraints to Food Security

Due to their weak economic circumstances, the women in this study are forced to live in shanty towns, sometimes far from the Central Market. This distance places an extra burden on their food collection strategies. The Central Market may be cheaper, but the added cost of taptap transportation, a boat, hiring a man with a wheelbarrow, or the physical constraints of carrying heavy quantities of food long distances needed to be considered. When speaking about their neighbourhoods, five of the participants commented that they would prefer to move closer to markets. Distance determines food choices, due to volume and frequency. Distance also influenced how secure a woman felt. Women are vulnerable targets of violence and there is little initiative by the state police force to keep women safe. Reports of rape, theft and other violence are met with inaction

by police. Even men will not travel far by foot on the streets of Cap Haitien at night. In one specific case, a participating woman reported a rape to police. Initially the police were reluctant to follow through with logging the complaint or tracking down the perpetrator. The perpetrator protested to the neighbours that the woman had reported him to the police and she was chased out of her neighbourhood. No action was taken against the man (I28:May17). Although rape is illegal, this law in not enforced by the predominantly male police force. The inaction by police sustains the dominant social norms of a woman as vulnerable sexual object and creates unsafe places for women. A woman's body is considered a sexual object for men's use. This creates unsafe places for women.

Women's food security was affected by the distance they needed to travel. When asked about security a participant remarked, "Sometimes it is difficult to get back home because few cars are running late at night so I am in the street with all my food waiting on transportation" (I12:May18). A different participant made a decision to alter her spatial distance to the markets, "I moved to Fort St. Michel it is better and safer than Shada. It is better because it is closer to market, and the taptap for the kids to go to school" (I17:May20). Many women, shared the opinion of this participant, "I go home at 4 or 5 pm because it becomes dangerous" (I21:May21). Another participant notes: "It is a little dangerous after four pm to travel in the city. I work until four and then have to get food and go home" (I18:May20). Women did not enjoy secure freedom of movement at all times of the day in Cap Haitien. There was a lack of state support for their personal safety and they experienced threats to their personal security. This threat of violence restricted their ability to generate income and threatened their food security.

### 5.4.2 Temporal Constraints to Food Security

Being food insecure made women vulnerable to changes in the economy. Women discussed their desire to buy local rice but low availability and higher prices made this difficult. Women also observed that imported staples from the Dominican Republic and the United States were consistently available. Seasonal restrictions, high prices on imported food such as eggs, wheat and rice, high prices during global food price spikes, and high prices in times of crisis such as severe weather and political manifestations all

affected the participants' ability to access food. The women use a range of strategies in these times of desperation. For instance, a participant admitted, "Yes, the prices went up with global price increases but I continued on regardless, I had no choice, I cooked one cup of rice instead of two" (I7:May16). A young participant revealed, "Sometimes I would suffer if I don't have anything to eat sometimes I would pluck lamns[31] and go sell them for money to eat" (I14:May19). A different participant would boil water and put bread in it for everyone to eat. A further participant snacked on crackers, or a bread and Kool Aid mixture when food was limited, while another woman fed her children bread and sweet tea (like Kool-Aid) to kill the hunger pains and if the children could not sleep she told them jokes (I20:May21).

### 5.4.3 Informal Labour Markets

Since there was a lack of formal economic opportunities available to women, commerce was the most relied upon income strategy deployed by the women of *Fanm en Action.* As expressed by one woman participant, "Commerce is for a woman who does not have a paying job" (I10:May17), indicating her dependence on the informal market. Women were perceived as having natural abilities in with the informal markets, but excluded from the formal labour market that provided decent, regular pay and beneficial social networking opportunities.

Two well established participants referred to their commerce businesses as an important income strategy. Quoting one participant, "In my business I have money I can count on daily" (I17:May20), and from the other, "When my money runs out then I turn to commerce" (I2:May15). There are other benefits of commerce activities, the women can eat from their businesses or if selling used clothing (called *peppy)* they supplied their own family's clothes. Another participant remarked that, "Even if I did do something else I would do the commerce because it brings in money every day." During focus groups the women expressed that commerce was a good activity for them because they were their own bosses, could structure their activities around other household responsibilities, and determined themselves how hard they worked. A local agronomist noted that in Haitian culture, "women are considered to be good business people, they set the prices, and run

[31] Lamns are a tree fruit that grow in most regions of Haiti, except in the high mountain areas.

the markets" (I27:June1). As articulated by a participant, "Commerce is a field for a woman when you don't have a job" (I19:May20), indicating that women who are not qualified for work in the formal sector could work in the informal economy. Women were usually in charge of organizing the informal food markets, however the institutional food trade (supermarkets) was organized and managed by men with women only working as tellers rather than managers.

FGDs with the participants revealed the instability of this commerce work and how in actual fact the participants were left food insecure. The women reported that sales were dependent on weather conditions, holiday seasons, political uprisings, and being healthy enough to work, while their goods were a target of theft. Some days commerce was unprofitable and the women sold very little to nothing, in part because there were many women selling the same goods and undercutting market prices. As explained by a participant, "The market is very competitive and all the vendors buy from the same source and the big sellers dominate the market" (I18:May20). Many commerce women lived far from the market areas and would rent a place nearby to store their goods, especially *peppy* which can be very heavy. They were then at risk of losing their goods to theft or damage by rats. One participant who used to sell frozen juices and cookies in front of the cathedral reported:

> I would keep my commerce goods in the cathedral and someone stole all of it, I lost 3000 Haitian [$375 USD]. Making prices [bargaining food prices] is stressful, because I do not have enough money. I would like to eat more. I go days when the kids and I don't eat. I can't even count how many times that has happened. Sometimes I get angry at God, and I cry, and then I regret getting angry with God and I ask God if I am the one he hates the most. I have no family to rely upon. I have ulcers because of the worrying, I do not have the money for medicine. I was told to hang around happy people (I20:May21).

This participant is expressing the desperation she felt as a woman unable to provide for her family and the humiliation she felt in the market place. Accessing markets was necessary to earn cash for food exchanges, and having to stretch a meagre income was an emotional stress the women endured. This participant was vulnerable, moving in and out

of the unstable informal market, which left her family in a food insecure position. Commerce activities did not guarantee income, but instead came with many constraints, including theft, illness and the inability to work or find buyers during rainy days or during political manifestations, or due to illness.

### 5.4.4 Formal Labour Markets

Ability to labour is an asset according to Sen (1981). Gender defines perceptions about one's worth and abilities and leads to discrimination in hiring practices. These perceptions reduce a woman's bargaining power in the formal employment market because her worth is underestimated. Incorrect perceptions are institutionalized as social norms, and the spaces for women are limited based on that construction. This social norm weakens women's bargaining position with employers and they are exploited as cheap labour. By institutionalizing lower wages for women they become valuable labour for the apparel industry. Their gendered position materializes as clothing for developed nations and the political economy is structured to achieve these ends. For the consumer of these products the food insecure women are invisible.

Women are not only exploited for cheap labour but also for sex during formal employment situations. Employers or managers of formal income opportunities sometimes request sex in exchange for secure employment, retained employment, and promotions. During an interview, one male employer admitted to demanding sex from women in exchange for employment at his institution. He reported that this was a common practice in Cap Haitien, and this was corroborated by the participants (I28: May17). A female colleague divulged that while working for an international organization the manager demanded sex to ensure continued employment. She rejected the offer and lost her position with the organization (I33: June4). A woman is left in a weak bargaining position as the state does not have an effective judicial system in place to protect her. Commerce may be an unstable form of income generation, but it is a performance that subverts the discourse of 'sex for formal labour'.

## 5.5 Institutions

The household, the market place, the community and institutions are the four arenas where the participants of *Femme en Aksyon* were able to source food. Each of these arenas were places in which perceptions that women contribute less than men to Haitian society prevailed. These perceptions are internalized and performed by men and women materializing them as social norms. These values are taken with a woman into other arenas, making her weaker in the process of bargaining. However, women are not complacent in this construction. Women can strengthen their intra-household bargaining position by association with nongovernment organizations through direct supplies of food provisions or with programming that would increase their endowments.

### 5.5.1 The Urban Community Project

The Urban Community Project (UCP) offered programs that attempted to increase the women's endowments, such as increasing access to credit, literacy training, business training, child care, medical care or housing. As discussed earlier, at the UCP fathers rarely arrived with malnourished or ill children. Although the Centre's policy was not to turn men away, the social norm of women as primary caregivers dictated who would arrive asking for help, and women would capitalize on these gender-related entitlements making the Centre largely a feminized space. As welcoming as the Centre was, it came with its own set of social requirements. The Centre was directed by a Catholic Sister and even though the women participants were not all Catholic, nor were they all religious, prayer was required at the beginning of each meeting and the women were obliged to participate. This participation was not a written policy but a social expectation.

The Sister had explained that respect for the Catholic Church was declining in Haiti. She resisted this societal shift by performing the necessary symbolic rituals to establish a Catholic presence at the Centre and in the lives of the participants. It was evident that the Sister dominated the lives of some of the women. For instance, the women openly complained about the harsh treatment and humiliation[32] they received within the micro-credit programming by the Sister, to ensure that the small loans would

[32] Along with comments from the participants, I witnessed Sr. Grace verbally reprimand the participants in a public setting.

be repaid. As reported by participants of *Fanm en Aksyon*, some women resisted the humiliation by defaulting on their debt and not returning to the Centre, while others would endure the domination to ensure continued access to the programs. Subjecting themselves to humiliation from the Sister is a public transcript which some women were willing to perform in order to continue receiving loans. However, if repayment became too difficult to achieve, the women resisted through absence, losing the possibility of future loans. They were no longer willing to use their self-worth as an endowment to exchange for loans. These women weighed the opportunity of future micro-loans against the humiliation and decided to forgo future benefits from the Centre. This decision must have been difficult considering both the weight of the societal norm that women are primarily responsible for the reproduction of the household and their food security.

The experience of shame and humiliation was a common complaint amongst the women who accessed the programs at the UCP. A relatively new participant of the UCP programs stated, "I have not asked to be part of the commerce program at the UCP, I feel ashamed to ask to be part because my children are already receiving help" (I20:May21). Later in the interview she broached the topic again declaring, "I am ashamed to ask for help. I have been humiliated. I can't take any more rejection" (I20:May21). Humiliation and shame shaped a woman's perception of her entitlements and her ability to bargain for further benefits. The perception that poor woman do not deserve entitlements materialized in the behaviours of the participants through their feelings of shame, humiliation and fear of asking for help, or as expressed earlier, in refusing to let their neighbours know they are without food.

### 5.5.2 AFASDA

Institutions can provide direct food aid or can increase women's assets and bargaining skills by altering their self-perceptions, thereby strengthening their self-confidence and ability to bargain. AFASDA (*Association Femmes Soleil d'Haiti*), a gender-progressive organization, through its existence and programming offers knowledge that encourages women to resist and renegotiate social norms for women. Through their work they increase women's literary skills, provide shelter, medical aid and counselling for women who have been abused, legal and medical aid to female prisoners, and ensure that women are trained and educated with respect to the defence

and promotion of their human rights. AFASDA holds seminars for women in both rural and urban communities in the region on women's rights, with special emphasis on the topics of marriage, cohabitation, obtaining legal status for children, paternity and alimony, and adultery. Through this work AFASDA disrupts the gendered identities upheld by social norms and creates a schism in the dominant narrative.

Their activities do not go unnoticed. Sr. Grace commented that the work of AFASDA is questionable. The Catholic Church supports the unity of the family and therefore cannot agree with ASFASA's approach of encouraging women to leave abusive husbands. Here we see two institutions in conflict with each other as the dominant narrative is challenged. If Sr. Grace represents the views of the church then it appears that the ideology of the Catholic Church supports keeping women in subservient and dangerous positions where their entitlement to safety and basic needs are not respected. The Centre also did not supply condoms in accordance with the teachings of the Catholic Church and the principles of abstinence. This policy ignores the socio-economic position of the women and leaves them vulnerable to HIV/Aids, sexually transmitted diseases and unwanted pregnancies. When a participant was questioned on the subject of the church they stated, "Many pastors never show their wives honour in the church. It didn't start in the church, but from colonial days in the plantations. Now the church, and the schools hold onto these lessons and the women and children are mistreated" (I20:June21). One informant revealed that his instructor at theology school was shunned by his colleagues because he taught that women were equal to men (I29:June5). By not understanding the day to day challenges of women, modeling disrespect to women, and not giving them the means to have power over their lives, the Church reduces women's bargaining power within households, communities, markets and institutions and thereby increases their vulnerability to food insecurity. Conversely, the work of AFASDA opens a new political space for dialogue that supports women, allowing them to challenge these socially constructed norms which dominate their lives.

### 5.5.3 Commercial Banks

Like the Catholic Church, financial institutions are patriarchal spaces in which perceptions about women are built and disseminated. In Haiti, commercial banks

discriminate against women. As reported by a male bank manager, commercial loans target men, allowing them to take larger loans than women, even though bankers acknowledge that women are more trustworthy and less likely to default on loans. This male dominated space keeps women disadvantaged economically. Women who cannot access loans cannot embark upon entrepreneurial businesses as easily as their male counterparts, thereby increasing their financial dependence on men. Micro-credit offers the women a means to resist the social norms instituted by the Haitian banking system and women from *Fanm en Aksyon* used this opportunity at the Centre to subvert the dominant social norm. Micro-credit loans were also offered by Fonkoze Bank, however the women participants did not consider Fonkoze Bank an option, due to high interest rates, small loans, and the lack of available group loans. Within focus group discussions the participants indicated that banks were a space of intimidation and humiliation because of their socio-economic class. None of the women held a bank account and during the process of opening a bank account for *Fanm en Aksyon* it was observed that the female employees treated the women poorly, reinforcing class differences. The women described this experience as humiliating and embarrassing. People without collateral or significant income potential feel excluded from the banking process and this wealth inequality and social exclusion is an attribute of the Haitian political economy.

### 5.5.4 Bargaining at Institutional Food Sources

Although there were many non-government organizations in Cap Haitien the women listed only three institutional sources of food: the World Food Programme (WFP), the UCP, and the Bel-Air Mission. The WFP only distributes food to other institutions such as schools, churches, and the UCP,[33] not to individuals.[34] The women also remarked that often the food rations from the WFP are misdirected and sold on the black market. Schwartz (2008) also documents this well established practice of misdirecting food aid for profit. Of the institutions reported, only the UCP provided food rations directly to the women and usually only for their children, except during very difficult times in which food rations were to be distributed. Women recognized and

[33] In June of 2009 the WFP suspended shipments to the UCP, without explanation.

[34] After the 2010 earthquake the WFP began food aid handouts directly to the city inhabitants.

capitalized on this gender-related entitlement. Children who were severely malnourished, less than fifteen percent below the body weight for their age and between the ages of five and sixty months, were admitted to the daily nutrition program for six months[35]. The mothers would leave their children for the day at the Centre while they pursued other activities, such as commerce. In this sense the Centre offered the women a reprieve from the social norm of woman as caregiver, giving them the opportunity to earn income and improve her food security. Women who brought their children to the Centre, if interested, could enrol in the commerce and the micro-credit program to learn business skills and obtain small loans to enhance their income earning activities. These activities augmented the women's basket of assets. Having a malnourished child was not a requirement to enrolment in these other programs, but it was an easy way to become involved in the Centre. As explained earlier, the relationship to the Centre was an important social network that women put effort and cooperation into maintaining, through participation in religious rituals and enduring humiliation. This connection improved their food security and increased their bargaining position by providing medical care and food to their children and occasionally themselves, and by providing literacy classes, business skill training, occasionally homes, and small loans.

The Bel Air Mission was one church that distributed WFP food aid. It delivered food once a month and was described by the participants as an overcrowded, intimidating and humiliating experience, as reported by two participants. One older participant, with one malnourished child said, "I am too ashamed to take the free food from [Bel Air Mission] every third Saturday, everybody fights to get in line and the young men take from the older women" (I22:May21), and another timid young woman, new to the city, and with very weak social networks in Cap Haitien noted, "Bel Air Mission for food is difficult to get in even for one meal" (I9:May17). The competition was overwhelming for these two women.

The only church reported by *Fanm en Aksyon* to be distributing food was the Bel Air Mission. This left the UCP as the only institution the women of *Fanm en Aksyon* considered as a viable food strategy, thus cooperation with the Centre and with this

[35] If after six months of daily treatment the children's health was regained then they would be transferred to a monthly check up program for another six months.

research project was of vital importance to them. This point will be further unravelled in the discussion section.

### 5.6 The State

As indicated earlier, the participants had commented on the continued lack of state support. Water, sanitation, schools and road infrastructure had not received adequate maintenance. Water was no longer free. Hospital staff and school teachers were infrequently paid, as reported by other NGO staff (I34:May7). One married participant (I19:May20) complained that life was difficult because her husband, a teacher, had not been paid in months, thereby leaving them in a food insecure position. Structural adjustment had reduced the revenue of the state by privatizing state assets and redirecting government revenue away from social programming that would keep the population healthy and educated. The market place has been prioritized and scarce resources were redirected toward debt repayment and extracted by elite business classes. As instructed by the SAP, the government was unable to meet its salary commitments. These measures shaped the participants' lives increasing their food insecurity.

As discussed, through its policing standards the state affects the women's safety, spatial mobility and food security. The state upholds the construction of women as vulnerable sexual objects by the inaction of the state police, thus materializing and reinforcing this social norm. A Canadian INTERPOL[36] officer who was stationed in Cap Haitien, noted that efforts were being made to retrain the local police force to respect the rights of women, but he admitted, overcoming the social norms was difficult (I28:May17). During focus group discussions the participants were asked whether they would consider approaching the local municipal government for land or financial support. The reaction was explosive as the women expressed fear of the local government and possible exposure to tear gas. Clearly, state support is not present to help women overcome their social and spatial restrictions to food security.

The state has not been forthcoming with food price controls for several reasons. Firstly, the reduction of tariffs has put local agricultural production in direct competition with global rice, wheat, corn and soy oil producers, creating unemployment in the

[36] INTERPOL, International Criminal Police Organization

agricultural sector. Secondly, the lack of agricultural extension service, as well as infrastructure and value chain management has undermined local production and increased food insecurity. Thirdly, there was a lack of government involvement in regulating high prices on imported items such as eggs, wheat and rice. This problem was exacerbated during political protests, severe weather episodes, and the global food price increases in 2008 which resulted in food riots. The women participants reported that during this time, "It became harder for us, too expensive, some days I did not have enough money to buy anything" (I5:May16). With state revenues reduced and rerouted to debt repayment in accordance with structural adjustment, it has become increasingly difficult for the state to respond to the needs of its population.

## 5.7 Urban Agriculture

Three women in the group had access to land for gardening. Two were successful gardeners who rented land in the peri-urban area and one novice gardener attempted to garden beside her house. The two successful gardeners ate and sold the produce from their gardens, and both women reported going only a few days per year without food, a dramatic difference compared to other members of the group. One participant commented: "the market is poor quality, my garden is good," in fact, "I buy rice and cornmeal, but all vegetables come from my garden-- plantain, potatoes, bananas, yam" (I8:May17). A few women reminisced about their childhood prior to migration to the city. The third gardener had no crops due to flooding and neighbouring cows.

One well established participant outwardly resisted the food insecure position the state and global economy have tried to place upon her. Four years ago she began a garden. Depending on the season she would visit her garden up to four times a week by taking a half-hour taptap ride. She paid three people to work in the garden for her, and grew plantain, peanuts and pistachios to sell in the city. This participant is a strong woman who was not hindered by the constructed roles that the other women expressed as barriers to gardening. She attributed her ability to afford her children's schooling, and her ability to have reserve funds (savings) to repair her roof after a hurricane, to the garden. She also was interested in planting more plantain, peanuts and pistachios if *Fanm en Aksyon* could find land, and was willing to teach the other women how to garden. Urban

agriculture dramatically improved her life. Women migrants who did participate in agriculture in the rural setting also understood the benefits of gardening. However, although gardening was viewed as a good source of food there were reservations about participating due to perceived and real barriers.

### 5.7.1 Social and Spatial Constraints to Urban Agriculture

In this section I will discuss the perceived and real social and spatial constraints women faced in using urban and peri-urban agriculture to improve their food security and the women's response to these constraints. The constraints reported by the women include money, distance, gendered roles, lack of knowledge, theft, time, weather, neighbouring animals causing damage and the most common reason – access to land.

The two successful participant gardeners both rented land. The cost of renting was affordable. As one woman indicated, "I rented a half acre of land for five years, it costs $500 Haitian/year [US $65/yr] for land and wages [for working the land and weeding], it was not too expensive. It was too expensive to hire someone to carry water from the river" (I17:May20). She was born in Cap Haitien, rented land outside the city and brought her vegetables to the city to sell. Each return trip would cost her 20 gourd (US $.50). This gardener was able to recover the cost of travel, hired help and renting land from selling her garden produce. Her garden was far from the closest water source making the cost of labour prohibitive and installing a well was too expensive, however her garden grew well despite this barrier. This strong woman has proven that she is able to navigate the social, spatial and financial constraints of gardening to meet her intended goals.

Roles of women with respect to gardening revealed interesting perspectives. Women can perform the full range of farming activities although if a male was present they would not hoe the soil, dig holes for plantain, or use a pick, but would plant seeds, water, weed and harvest. When asked, men responded that if a woman was to perform these activities then the men would put down their tools and tell her that she can do the work (I24:May24). Certain behaviours are ascribed to men and women in Haitian society. From M. R., a landowning male cultivator, "A women can work half and half with the

[male] labour. The women not could work the pick[37] but it is the way of Haiti that the women plant the corn. Women are not conditioned for the pick. But they are conditioned for carrying the water from the far away springs on their head, they have strong necks" (I24:May24). This statement was corroborated by a participant who stated: "Women cannot dig, we can only carry. Root vegetables require a lot of digging to extract from the ground" (I15:May19). This idea that women are inherently better as water carriers is performed and re-performed in the gardens and in the city streets by commerce women carrying their wares upon their heads. The role of women as water carriers is so engrained that even a foreign man revealed, "When I lived in the city I had to hire two young girls to fetch my water. If I had done it I would have been the laughing stock of the community" (I25:June10). The pressure to conform to socially constructed roles influences how daily tasks are performed. These gender relations impinge on the economic outcomes both sexes enjoy. For instance these differences are perceived as barriers to the participants and thus discourage gardening, and therefore these relations materialize not only as an ideology but also in tangible ways.

The role of women as gardeners was met with mixed responses. Most of the women acknowledged that gardening without a man, especially for digging, would be outside of the normal gender roles. Two participants stated that even a woman's organization needs a man's help for digging (I6:May16; I5:May16), and another established her limitations as a woman: "Gardening – no ground, no money, too hard to pay for the labour because sometimes they take all the good food. If I were a man it would be different" (I20:May21). Meanwhile some of the young women were more optimistic. A young twenty year old woman participant stated, "I don't know if a woman can do gardening, money and getting land hinders us but I am willing to hire someone" (I16:May19). Another nineteen years old participant verified: "This is a job a man or a woman can do, and if I had the money and land I would do it" (I12:May18).

A participant who was also a seasoned gardener planted the seeds in her two gardens herself, but hired out the weeding. She grew corn, beans, manioc, yams, plantain and sometimes she sold her garden produce with her other commerce goods. She

[37] A pick is a long curved metal hand tool used for breaking the ground. It is sharpened at both ends and fitted into a long handle.

contended that today that there are fewer people to rely upon and the cost of living has increased, so she relied upon her garden as a food procurement strategy. Furthermore, because of the garden she was able to feed her parents and brother who all lived nearby. She did reveal that "it is not acceptable for a woman to do gardening without a man, because there are more men. However, I would do gardening without a man" (I8:May17). This participant gardener has demonstrated that she can successfully to resist and subvert the constructed gender roles that prevent women from gardening.

Women who had not gardened before regarded hired help as a constraint. As stated by one participant, "I have no land. If I had the land I would [garden]. And it costs a lot to hire the labour, one group to dig the land, another to plant, another to harvest, and another to transport—4 groups to pay." Hired help is a strategy and a constraint. Another participant had trouble with her hired help either not showing up for work or stealing the produce. The benefit of hired help was clearly stated by (I8: May 17), "Weeding takes a lot of time and she would prefer to do commerce." Hiring labour leaves the women free to complete other household and income generating activities and addressed the constraint of limited knowledge. Another participant stated, "I am interested in growing food, but I personally would not be able to do it because of lack of knowledge. I could do it if I were trained" (I10:May17). Hiring qualified help was an appropriate solution to negotiate gender and class issues, but prevented women from accumulating appropriate agricultural knowledge. Even M R., the male cultivator originally from the city, admitted that he relied upon hired rural farmers with their expert knowledge to work his land. The women were further inspired during a field trip to Foundation Vincent, an agricultural school in the heart of the city. This trip helped to break down the mystery of agriculture as the tour guide, an agronomist from the school, explained the different methods used for different crops, livestock and composting. With this beginning piece of knowledge the women began to understand their own capabilities.

The women participants were torn between the internalized perception that they were not built for certain tasks and their desire to benefit from the gardening activity. Two of the participants had clearly demonstrated that gardening could be a negotiated into a socially acceptable activity with hired help, allowing them to avoid social norm constraints of women as gardeners and still stay empowered as business women, a

socially acceptable role. Social norms are a powerful construct which controls women's behaviour. Although I have expressed the voices of the women that were hesitant, Mme Bert captured the feeling expressed by the majority of the group when she said, "I don't *not have land but if I did have land I would grow food." Removing the constraint of* access to land would allow the women to participate in an activity they deemed useful to meet their household food needs.

Theft, time, weather and crop damage from neighbouring animals were all issues of concern, however the women felt that these issues could be resolved. Theft could be addressed by hiring one or two young boys to watch over the garden, or through fencing. Fencing would also address the destruction by animals, and even light bamboo fencing is enough to deter neighbouring cows and goats. As a women's organization they felt they could take turns dividing the work load and thus diminishing the time commitment, thereby fitting it in with both their commerce activities and household responsibilities. Weather (flooding and hurricanes) was identified as a potential problem but they felt that this should not stop them from trying to garden.

I observed plentiful agricultural land surrounding the city of Cap Haitien. One participant established earlier that renting land was affordable, and she further insisted that, "Women can own land. There is no difference for women or men to buy land, but it is hard to find land to buy" (I7:May16). Although land is lying fallow in the peri-urban area, and women and men both can equally own land, this participant revealed that purchasing is difficult. As discovered during the FGDs, financing impedes land purchases, firstly, because upon investigation the bank would not finance land purchase for a gardening project, and secondly, the women revealed their reluctance to accumulate any large amount of debt. The participants, many of them from the Centre's microcredit program, know the difficulty in paying debt.

Through participatory research the participants analyzed their food insecurity, the social and spatial barriers and attributes that enable them to procure food. The majority of the families were experiencing some food shortages and all but one woman was interested in gardening to alleviate her food security issue. All of the women recognized the gendered issues with regard to gardening, yet were willing to resist and contest those roles, and to navigate through them, in order to reach their intended goal. In fact, it was

stated: "I would like to change the place of women through agriculture" (I20:May21). This statement was made after a discussion that women need more economic power to change the treatment of women in Haitian society. The garden was seen as an asset to reach that entitlement, or in other words a form of resistance against a dominant narrative.

## 5.8 Summary

The qualitative study elucidated that the urban women participants were able to access food directly or indirectly through four bargaining arenas: the household, the community, the markets and institutions. Within each arena perceptions of women were created. As demonstrated, the performance of men and women materialized perceptions into social norms that restricted women's food security. These social norms restricted women's opportunities and burdened them with responsibilities that reduced their food security. Women attempt to negotiate and resist these constructions but the changing political economy of food has limited their choices and left them subordinate to the identity created for men. Social norms controlled women's behaviour by creating a perception of low self-worth that the women internalized and used as a barometer for their ability to bargain and their perception of entitlement.

As expressed by the women participants, commerce activities were very problematic, failing for a mired of reasons, yet still considered a very important survival strategy mainly because few other strategies were available. Urban agriculture was also considered a viable survival strategy, but a space where women needed to negotiate and contest gendered social norms and physical spatial constraints. Two of the women of *Femme en Aksyon* had proven that gender relations and spatial constraints could be resisted and navigated within the space of urban agriculture with very successful outcomes. Although the participants acknowledged that gendered barriers to urban agriculture existed, they also acknowledged that urban agriculture had the potential to increase their economic power and give them the ability to begin to resist their constructed position in Haitian society.

With neoliberalism, the focus on markets in the global food economy only prioritizes the extraction of wealth upward through vertical linkages. The suffering of

women in the shape of persistent food insecurity and humiliating survival strategies remains invisible to the neoliberal market system, is never accounted for in the cost of doing business, and thus remains an externality.

# Chapter Six

# Food Security in the Field: A Theoretical Analysis

## 6.1 Introduction

This discussion, presented in a feminist political ecology framework, draws on the concepts of exchange entitlement, vulnerability and bargaining from Sen (1977, 1981), Adger (2006), Watts (1993) and Agarwal (1997) to explore the ways in which women experience food security as a gendered difference. Furthermore, I highlight how Haiti's reduced internal agri-food trade, justified by the prescription of the SAP, has increased women's inequality, redistributed power unevenly, and decreased the power and ability of women to control or resist the actions of others. All of these changes in the women's lives are, as in the words of Wright, invisible to the policy makers and the institutions that promoted structural adjustment, the deregulation of the economy and reform of the Haitian agricultural sector. A feminist political ecology framework integrates the voices of the participants into the research while examining the political ecological factors that constrain women from producing food and the entitlements necessary to access food. This feminist theoretical approach is also an epistemological approach which enabled qualitative methods and participatory action research to facilitate the experience of the women participants in order to direct the research. This chapter is based on the experiences and voices enunciated through this methodology.

By drawing on the concepts of exchange entitlements and vulnerability from Sen (1977, 1981) and Adger (2006) I was able to determine factors that affected the participants' food security. These factors are explored and discussed within an adapted version of Agarwal's bargaining framework. From this research I conclude that the women participants continually face barriers constituted by class, age and gender and have a difficult time resisting and negotiating these constructed barriers to increase their food security. At times the women may chose to sustain social norms to increase short term food security. However, this action reconstitutes and solidifies the same social norms that heighten persistent food insecurity through the construction of gender, class and age barriers.

After discussing the experience of food insecurity I will review PAR to clarify some of the social norms, positions of power and conflict, and cultural traditions that developed over centuries of colonialism and development interventions that worked against the employment of this methodology. Finally I will discuss the benefits of PAR realized by the women in this same context.

My Objectives:

1. To examine different food sources that urban women access in urban Cap Haitien
2. To explore critical social and spatial relations that affect women's food security in urban Haiti
3. To examine how urban women negotiate social and spatial inequalities
4. To determine the constraints women might face (social and spatial) in using urban agriculture to improve their food security

The participant objectives:

5. *Kouman ou fe pou komite a fa? (Kouman w fe yon kominite?)* How do you make a community?
6. *Kote nou jwen manje?* Where do we get our food?
7. *Kouman nou ka depanse mwens kob sou manje?* How can we spend less money on food?
8. *Kouman pou nou fe pou nou jwen yon solisyon sou kondisyon manje?* How are we going to make a solution to obtain food?

## 6.2 Food Security Revisited

Food security can be defined as access to enough food by all people at all times to ensure an active and healthy life at the household level, for all of its members (Maxwell & Frankenburg 1992, Von Braun et al. 1993, Maxwell 2001). As identified in Chapter Two the three main attributes of food security have been defined as availability, access and adequacy. Food availability is defined as the presence of sufficient quantities of appropriate food from domestic production, commercial imports or donors. Access refers to adequate income or resources to obtain appropriate levels of food in order to maintain

adequate consumption. Finally, adequacy refers to the food supply being safe, nutritious, culturally appropriate and available in the necessary variety and quantity. This section will illuminate the woman participant's food insecure position by discussing their experience in relation to these three attributes.

### 6.2.1 Availability

Food availability is defined as the presence of sufficient quantities of appropriate food from domestic production, commercial imports or donors. As argued the changes in the Haitian agri-food system are a result of broader political and economic forces. This research concurs with the work of Maxwell (1999) and SAPRIN (2004), in that the issue with developing countries internal food economy is not entirely a problem of over population, but rather, it is an issue of increasing rural unemployment and urban population growth grounded in the application of the SAP. As discussed, in Haiti during the 1980s and 1990s, this removal of tariffs led to the collapse of the rural agri-food sector sending a mass migration to the urban centres in search of non-existent employment and increasing food insecurity. The exposure of domestic production to foreign competition has led to the collapse of the agricultural system in Haiti. Haiti is unable to maintain domestic production to ensure sufficient food availability and has become dependent on foreign food products (imports and food aid), and consequently vulnerable to global food availability and price spikes.

Watts and Boyle (1993) argue that the causal structure of vulnerability can be considered from multiple vantage points: 1) spatial factors (local, regional and transnational); 2) temporal factors (a long-term structural condition or a short-term circumstance); 3) political or economic factors. These factors were revealed in this research. Haiti's internal food trade position in the global market has been structured by external forces, both historical and current, to serve a peripheral function to the metropolis, as a source of a narrow commodity base of cheap tropical products for Europe, and today to the United States along with supplying cheap labour in the light assembly industry. Furthermore, Haiti has always served as a market for foreign manufactured goods and now as a market for American subsidized agricultural overproduction. This has left the Haitian population in a position of food vulnerability. In this sense my research concurs with

previous scholarship that local food insecurity is in part due to these larger global economic and political pressures, which limit the local communities and individual's ability to control and access resources, and the inability to regulate the actions of others (Watts 2000; Rocheleau, et. al 1996; Bryant and Bailey 1997; Robbins 2004, Weis 2007). In Haiti farmers were not invited to negotiate the policies that affected their livelihoods and family farming business models. They were in effect silenced, as the social fabric of their communities was torn, their loss was left invisible to the global neoliberal imperative that structured the change. The urban women participants were left dependent on foreign agricultural producers to stock local markets indicating that the restructuring of the agri-food sector has decreased the availability of local products and increased vulnerability to the availability of foreign food stocks and fluctuating global prices. In the words of Wright (2006), these women have been made 'invisible' participants in the global structure. In other terms, the forced contribution to the new neoliberal imperative made by these women came in the form of lost connections with the means of production and persistent food insecurity, equivalent to an unaccounted externality in an economic system.

### 6.2.2 Access

Access refers to adequate income or resources needed to obtain appropriate levels of food necessary to maintain adequate consumption. Prior research had been completed in Cap Haitien to understand why women were unable to access health care (Dakkar 2007), yet research not been completed in Cap Haitien to understand the difficulties in accessing food. Food insecurity was a significant and persistent problem for the participants. This group of women was underemployed in the informal sector, and lacked access to land to grow agricultural products. The greatest challenge to procurement of food for this particular group of urban women was not the persistent lack of available food, but the lack of endowments or the means to exchange entitlements to obtain food. There are two types of entitlements that impact food security: 1) endowments (or owned assets, such as land, but also labour, education) and; 2) exchange entitlements, which are mediated by social relations (Sen 1981). Sen argues that these two types of entitlements are the means by which people avoid food insecurity, and this research concurs with Sen's conclusion. In Sen's (1977) earlier work he acknowledges the connection of food shortages with a decline

in endowments precipitated by the alienation of grazing land. Sen links land ownership, or use to land, as a method of increasing one`s entitlements and reducing vulnerability to food insecurity. This research demonstrates the same idea in the context of food markets. With foreign producers replacing local producers in Haitian markets, these farmers are losing their entitlement to markets and their livelihoods. In effect, structural adjustment and the agenda of market liberalisation translated into decreased income and employment opportunities as small farms eventually failed, and increased vulnerability to food insecurity. The means of agricultural production was effectively moved offshore.

Within this new environment the participants tried to create new food survival strategies. However, referring back to Sen, the rules that ensured food ownership had been disrupted. Women lost more than land but also the family farm business and the adjoining social fabric that aided in food procurement. This rural system was far from secure but once disrupted the women needed to negotiate new barriers based on gender, age and class in the urban setting to negotiate new strategies. These barriers will be discussed in depth ahead.

### 6.2.3 Adequacy

Adequacy refers to the food supply being safe, nutritious, culturally appropriate and available in the necessary variety and quantity. The participants have commented on the lack of seasonal variety, poor quality and cleanliness. Seasonal fluctuations and the inability to store means they have less control over the variety of foods they eat. Increased rural-urban migration and foreign food imports has replaced traditional consumption of beans, maize, and sorghum, plantain, sweet potatoes and other roots and tubers with rice, wheat, refined sugar and soybean oil (FAO 2009; I6, May16; I2,May15; I21;May21). This concurs with scholarly contribution of Weis (2007), who discussed the global pattern of changing cultural food consumption patterns, increased rural-urban migration and an influx of foreign imports. This new food consumption requires less preparation time and thus fits the busy urbanized lifestyle where families often work away from home six days a week. Yet, it is far from a choice; people eat what is available transitioning away from traditional cultural practices and closer to integration with American agri-business. The changes in the

agri-food economy have been distributed unevenly and poor Haitians are unable to influence, or control, the new food system.

This change is not an improvement in their diet, but a transition from healthy diet of variety and quality food stuffs. Increased consumption of oils and sugars are considered unhealthy by developed world standards.[38] Refined rice is another concern, containing less vitamins and nutrients then unrefined local rice. The reduction in the variety and quality of foods is another indication of the invisible damage inflicted upon local lives. As established by (Bryant and Bailey 1997), multilateral institutions lead the way in promoting 'development' yet often the policies are to the benefit of wealthier nations and foreign corporations. The SAP increased the inequality between small farmers and large foreign agri-businesses by altering who has access to local food markets and disregarding the Haitian farmers' entitlements to those markets. The loss of market entitlements has meant a loss of culture and health entitlements, all of which remain invisible to the system.

### 6.3 Social and Spatial Limitations

This section discusses the social and spatial relations that place limitations on access to food sources. Relying on Sen (1981b, 1984), Agarwal (1997) and Adger(2006) and the feminist political ecological framework I will discuss how the constraints of gender, age, and class arise and reinforce each other in each of the four arenas. The arenas are an abstract framework in which to view and analyze the lives of the women. This approach does not give the research a complete view of the complexity of the participants' lives, and as such is limited in its application. However, for the purpose of this research it provides a framework in which to discuss the gendered constructs that limit the participants' access to food. It needs to be acknowledged that the gendered constructs collected are also a partial representation of the women's experience.

This section focuses of the discussion of access to food specifically for the urban women participants. As mentioned, access refers to adequate entitlements (income, resources, assets, social connections) needed to exchange for the maintenance of adequate food consumption levels. As Sen (1981) argued, hunger and starvation ought to be viewed

[38] Schwartz contends that the high consumption of oil is necessary to supplement fat intake of meagre diets, and health complications are not realized in Haiti due to shortened life expectancy (Schwartz 2010).

in terms of the collapse of entitlements, rather than a lack of food availability. Sen (1992) points out that the landless and those providing informal labour are more vulnerable to food insecurity, and delineates failures of land entitlement might occur through the alienation of land (loss of ownership, rental rights, usurp rights, communal rights), or in the loss of exchange entitlements (loss of employment, worsening terms of trade). Land in the urban or peri-urban for homes and gardens was valuable and had the potential of increasing the entitlements of the women through food production, yet due to the market collapse rural land was relatively worthless, as it was impossible to make a living by agriculture alone. It is the combination of land and value added agricultural production to be sold in the urban markets that could reduce the women's vulnerability.

The loss of rural land value caused by the disruption to local agri-food production, and the resulting migration to urban centers heighten the existing social and economic inequalities delineated by qualitative factors such as gendered social norms and perceptions. In other words, social relations that mediate exchange entitlements were negatively impacted and increased food insecurity. This disruption to social relations, based on the perceptions of women's ability and grounded in attributes of gender is where my research makes its greatest contribution, and where I will spending the greatest amount of time discussing with the scholarly contributions of Agarwal in mind. Agarwal (1997) argues gendered social norms and perceptions determine entitlements. These factors materialize as an underestimation of a woman's needs, her productive power and wage contributions, and her worth in the labour market, reducing her importance and her bargaining ability (Agarwal 1997). Within my research I observed women contesting their gendered roles with limited success. The most successful resistance was within the urban gardening plots of two participants. Usually the women's lives were boxed in by the gendered roles and constructions, which limited their entitlements to food security. Alternatively, I witnessed women capitalizing on the construction of the gendered role of commerce, sexuality and household reproduction by exploiting their daughters' labour. This allowed more time for the women to engage in commerce activities and improved household food security.

Social norms are realized through constructed representations of space and place. Informal food markets were constructed as the space and the place for Haitian commerce

women to participate in the internal food trade of Haiti. As stated earlier, their control over the food market ended at the doors of the supermarket, which was an organized formal institution. A formal institution requires what is perceived to be a man's talents and a man's privilege is required to access larger loans from the banks. These constructions exclude women from higher income earning opportunities leaving women to an over-saturated and fiercely competitive commerce market. In this example we see the arenas of the markets and the institutions reinforcing the construction of women's roles. Unequal social relations in this new urban environment are heightened through the exclusion from higher income formal markets, or alternatively the notion that women are only capable of working in the informal sector, thus increasing the participants' vulnerability and food insecurity.

As demonstrated, social norms of different arenas, or spaces, of the women's lives reinforce gendered constructs that limit their entitlements to food in other spaces. For instance, the construction of this group of women as 'commerce women' is reinforced by a banking system that does not approve large loans for women that would allow them to engage in more meaningful entrepreneurial activity. The Centre recreated the 'commerce' women through the micro-credit program which did not provide entrepreneurial and literacy training, leaving the women stuck in a cycle of loan payments and failing commerce activities. The women openly complained of this stating that "they worked for the Centre" (I18:May20). However, women must take responsibility for the reproduction of the household and thus must partake in commerce activities to feed their families. By having only a few survival strategies, one of which was commerce activities, the women continually earned low wages and were continually food insecure. However, with few other options available commerce activities did manage to keep them and their families from starving and could be called upon on most occasions. Equally, most of the women were hesitant to challenge the myriad of barriers to urban agriculture, which included the perception that women need men's help for this activity and that urban people purchase food and do not grow food. Constructed and constantly reinforced social norms keep these women food insecure.

Watts and Boyle (1993) explain vulnerability from an entitlement perspective. Specifically they refer to three socio-economic spheres: economic exchange, coping thresholds and informal social institutions. With these urban participants' lives dominated by the persistent effort of generating income for food purchases, it was evident that they were vulnerable to market perturbations – global price spikes, seasonal availability, earthquakes, political, social or weather disruptions. Post 2010 earthquake, food insecure women commented that relatives from Port-au-Prince that used to send remittances were now living with them, thus increasing the household's food needs (I37:May 2010). Their coping thresholds failed when their existing endowments were so few, and so fragile, in particular the reliance upon undependable men for financial assistance, unpredictable commerce activities, lack of access to agricultural land, social norms which prevented urban agriculture, and few reliable social networks, thereby increasing their vulnerability to food insecurity. The application of structural adjustment and subsequent increase of commerce women in local markets has increased the women's vulnerability. The women are further marginalized by age and class, which limit their ability to exchange their assets or in other words stretch their food dollars during the bargaining process. Intra-household dynamics, gender, age, births, death and marriage all play a role in a household's ability to exchange entitlements and respond to external stresses. This description is supported by Bryant and Bailey (1997) who suggest that the costs and benefits of change, in this exploratory study, a change to Haiti's internal food trade system, are usually distributed unequally between different groups, intensifying existing social and economic inequalities.

The current unfavourable terms of trade and integration into a new social network was not a homogeneous experience for these participants. Generally however, their exchange entitlements were relatively low and unfavourable to ensure food procurement. With the Haitian state non-functional in its ability to provide social support, the informal security system tried to adapt through a complex social network of family, community links and institutions. The women in this study had very limited social networks upon which to rely which were inadequate in relieving food insecurity. Many of the participants were not well integrated into social security arrangements that would increase their food security. This poor social networking was in part aggravated during migration from rural communities, in part because of the lack of state social support, and in part because

members of their social-economic groups suffered from the same food vulnerability, indicated by the findings on food sharing. The social relations they did build by sharing food were not called upon, as historically life in Haiti always worsened, so these moral obligations perhaps were saved for times of increased suffering. Social relations or remaining networks to rural places experienced greater food insecurity than the urban participants and therefore could not be relied upon, so ultimately building networks of favours within the Centre were very relevant in the lives of the participants to ensure food security, and this impacted the execution of PAR. It can be stated that social networks at the time of this research were not well provided in their socio-economic urban community, in their remaining rural social networks, or through the state.

The participants recognized the shortage in social networks in their new urban setting and called upon the traditional Haitian values of organizational building to increase their social networks. This new community encompassed both the definitions I presented in Chapter Five, as they were organizing themselves through shared common culture, values, interests, goals and social identity (Gregory et al. 2009; Agarwal 1997), and Joseph's (2002), as he contends community refers more to the exercise of production and consumption within capitalism. Haitian women are business women, and their intention was to use the organization and urban agriculture as a business venture. If this new community had continued, relationships of moral responsibilities, or a moral economy, might have been built with the members and to some degree relied upon as an endowment that may be used for an exchange entitlement for securing food. *Konbits*[39] are one traditional form of organizing work parties. *Konbits* build social networks that can be relied upon for food during harvests. These organizations are seasonal with a fluid movement of participants in and out of the group. Future research could look deeper into the social networks of these participants to examine the unreported organizations to which they have belonged.

### 6.4 Response to Social and Spatial Inequalities

This section will discuss the women's response to social and spatial inequalities. Bryant and Bailey (1997) determine that because the changes to the political economy are

[39] For a richer description of the structure of konbits see the work of Jennie Smith (2001).

not distributed equally that individual power is altered in relation to others, disrupting one's ability to control or resist the actions of others. This scholarly contribution is relevant to the context of Haiti and to the study of feminist political ecology. With the disruption to agricultural families, men are no longer beholden to the farming business model. Women with absent partners are still saddled with the responsibility of reproducing the family and meeting their financial needs. Women still attempt to access men's wealth through sexual acquiescence, yet have lost their "playing card" in the relationship as men can live more successfully as independent agents in the urban setting. Thus women have lost their ability to influence men for the benefit of the survival of the family. Women's survival strategies have been marginalized, and even though men are an unreliable asset, just like commerce activities, they have no choice but to attempt to utilize these questionable assets. These findings parallel the research of Watts (1983) as he traced the disruption of functioning communities through colonial and postcolonial periods to delineate the reduction of social power and access to resources, which in turn reinforced social and political subjugation. These women have not only lost entitlements to food, they have lost their economic and social power, increasing their vulnerability and further marginalizing their position in Haitian society.

Gender, class and age dimensions play out in complex ways. Social and spatial restrictions are exacerbated by these dimensions, and as a response the women must resist, negotiate and sustain the social norms to their advantage to improve food security. These existing inequalities were heightened as Haiti's food system collapsed and food insecurity increased, deepening the power differential between men and women as existing gendered roles reinforced political and social subjugation. The factors listed in the bargaining framework are in no way a complete list, but allow for a deeper understanding of the day to day inequalities that have been exacerbated by the changing economy and to which the women respond. I attempt to conceptualize these attributes as externalities to the neoliberal system imposed upon Haiti. Increasingly unequal access to the food trade market, the amplification of existing social and economic inequalities, and the intensification of the power differential between men and women are a result of the change in the food economy of Haiti brought about by structural adjustment. These losses are invisible to those that

promote this neoliberal agenda and are nothing more than externalities in a capitalist system.

### 6.5 Urban Agriculture and PAR

By utilizing the PAR process outlined in previous chapters, the women analyzed their food security situation and came to the conclusion that urban agriculture could alleviate, in part, their food insecurity. The participants' intent was to supplement their commerce inventory with fresh or processed agricultural products and their families' diet with fresh food.

Despite the women's zeal to proceed, the project presented barriers. As was experienced by Patricia Maguire (1987) in her Participatory Research with the Battered Family Services in Gallup, New Mexico, I began to realize that the research group and I were perceived as threats to the hierarchal power structure of the Centre. Participatory Action Research is designed to allow for groups or individuals to self-design solutions to their self-perceived problems. This approach benefits the participants as it helps them to negotiate around existing power structures that kept them subordinate and dependent. The Centre shapes the lives of the women in this very way. The main stay of the Centre is a nutrition program, which is a short term solution, temporarily helping women and inserting them back into the social, political and economic stratification which keeps them food insecure. The micro-credit program was designed to offer literacy and business skill training, but was executed as a small business loan program geared to reproduce women to fit into the gendered role of commerce women. The urban agriculture project stood as a threat to this systematic reproduction of dependence. As stated by Maguire (1987), one has to be conscious of the powers that will be threatened by empowerment of others.

Three months after the initial field work I returned to see if the women had progressed with their project, and nothing had been accomplished. In fact, upon meeting with them they had reverted back to asking for micro-credit money and handouts for commencing larger commerce businesses. This was a stark contrast from the group of women I had left a few months early. The change caused me to reflect upon the participants' expectations, during earlier workshops, that benefits in the form of money or

material goods would be forthcoming. Fifty years of NGOs working in Haiti has made this a regular expectation amongst the population. As the workshops progressed the expectations diminished and the reality of the exercise to evaluate their food security became the objective. With this change of goals from gardening back to additional commerce I made the assumption that with time, and greater reflection, that the women had decided against the urban agricultural project due to barriers of time, balancing with existing work load, financial commitments, gender constraints or other logistical barriers previously discussed. Commerce had proven itself a familiar and reliable survival strategy. Alternatively, perhaps without continued exposure to agriculture they simply returned to the Centre, a well worn yet familiar path, or social network, that reduced their food insecurity. As Cooke (2001) suggested, groups will make riskier decisions than an individual might. The safety of the group appeared to allow them the luxury of at least talking about challenging the social norms that were preventing them from gardening. However, when asked, the women denied any of these reasons and reaffirmed their continued interest. With the mixed messages I left the field unsure whether PAR had been a successful exercise.

PAR shares an ideology with feminist bell hooks and Paulo Freire (2007) and his revolutionary mantra, 'we cannot enter the struggle as objects in order later to become subjects.' This statement captures the heart of the PAR exercise. I attempted to facilitate the participants as subjects in their search for answers for their own food security. As a feminist I underwent a transformative process of critical thought, which inspired me to struggle against the colonizing of the mindset. The question remains: Did the women fully engage as subjects to struggle against the colonizing mindset or was colonization repackaged into a new form? If the women never followed through with their organization or the agricultural project then did they ever see the project as theirs? When engaging such a process "One begins to think critically about the self and identity in relation to one's political circumstance" (hooks 1993: 147). Aware of the power associated with my role as Canadian Director I had made an effort to distance myself from this position of authority with the participants. Yet, this transformation was never fully achieved. The participants live so close to food insecurity that the research project was viewed, by some participants, as another possible survival strategy and was never

fully embraced as a method to challenge their food security on a pragmatic day to day level. I also, failed to realize how this process could alter my relationship and the women's relationship with the Centre's Haitian Director.

In my absence Sr. Grace had time to discourage the women from the urban agricultural project and to encourage the women to ask for money from the Centre's micro-credit program for their commerce activities. These actions were revealed by my translator and the women at a later date. Her objective, in part, appears to be to reinstate her perceived control over the lives of the women, and to perhaps end my perceived influence. The request for money for the micro-credit program perhaps was a ploy to bolster her reputation, or just fulfil another social norm in Haiti that '*blans*' from NGOs are to be manipulated in order to extract money. Regardless, it seems my position as a foreigner and as Canadian Director of the Centre negatively affected the PAR outcomes. This realization returns me to Cleaver (1999) who suggested that we need to consider all of the relationships that may impact PAR. The feminist political ecological approach answered the consideration of historical and spatial structures, and the gendered roles of households, communities, the state and the impact of NGOs. What the feminist political ecological approach did not consider, but which should have been considered by PAR, was the relationship between myself and Sr. Grace. This research revealed was that, although we stated that our working relationship was based on equality, team work and respect, the social norms about the Haitian/*blan* relationship would not allow these values to materialize, this was true of my relationship with the women participants too. As a practitioner of PAR assuming that power was not an element in our relationship was a critical mistake.

Maguire comments that participatory action participants do not underestimate the obstacles and barriers that restrict social change, "we simply underestimate people's passivity" (1987:44). I take issue with this conclusion and suggest that the women were not merely passive but were actively negotiating where their allegiance and energy should be put in order to best capitalize upon their endowments. Did they follow a performance to appease me and the Sister in the hopes of some material benefit? Did they invoke a performance to subvert me upon direction of the Sister who was gate keeper to

daily resources? Or were the participants working every possible angle to feed themselves and their households? This view would fit with Agarwal's argument "that an individual is likely to cooperate with the community insofar as it brings her/him greater economic, social or political gain than possible otherwise" (1997:29). Perhaps the women simply weighed their endowments of available labour, time, financial resources, land access, gendered constraints, uncertainty in the other members, or their own lack of self-worth and decided that urban agriculture was simply too risky a venture for women who live daily with food insecurity.

This possibility brings me back to the notion of whether I ever truly understood the subjective truth or the partial reality of the women participants. This reflection upon my position in the process, and how the participants related to me, adds reflexivity and rigour (Baxter and Eyles 1997). It is my belief that epistemological approach of PAR allowed for this understanding to be built and that the revelations of their lives were truthful and accurate, it provided a partial window into their reality. I further believe that if the process had occurred away from the centre, and if land, inputs, and continued agricultural lessons had been more easily accessible to the women, that they would have begun gardening had they had someone to facilitate the process.

## 6.6 Summary

The SAP increased the inequality between small farmers and large foreign agri-businesses allowing for the redirection of financial wealth from local food markets, and spatially redistributed unequally to off shore American agri-producers. This unequal access to food markets has had a ripple effect. Firstly, it disregarded and reduced the farmer's entitlement to those local markets and has created mass rural-urban migration, unemployment and food insecurity. Secondly, this disruption to the family farm business model has torn the social fabric which ensured the reproduction of the family. The resulting new urban life leaves women negotiating traditional gendered roles as reproducer of the family and as commerce women that were unreliable and heighten their food insecurity. However, with few other survival strategies except accessing men's wealth and building social networks with NGOs, commerce was a useful component in their basket of strategies. In this sense, the woman viewed urban agriculture to be a possible addition to

their basket of food security strategies. In the new urban life, the women participants experience poorer health, longer working hours, less personal security, and less food security. All of this suffering remains invisible to the neoliberal interests which set this downward spiral in motion. All of the aspects of quality have been extracted from these women's lives as if they were nothing more than externalities in the process of capitalism.

# Chapter Seven

# Gender Roles in the Global Food Plot

## 7.1 Introduction

As a measurement of the HDI, Haiti is the most disadvantaged country in the Western Hemisphere (UN 2010c). Although Haiti gained independence only 28 years after the United States, the trajectory of the wealth and well-being of the two nations could not be more different. The history of Haiti is rooted in colonial trade – importation of slaves from Africa and manufactured goods from Europe, in particular France, and exporting raw primary tropical commodities from plantations to Europe – binding Haiti into a relationship that undermined local innovation, tying production to the consumption patterns of Europe, and building the internal class system that exists today. Post independence Haiti's economy and political system fell under the control of a small elite class who continued the extraction of raw commodities, which had a brutal impact on the majority class. The decades spanning from independence to present day saw the majority of Haiti's GDP rerouted to the payment of international loans, leaving Haiti vulnerable and in a marginal negotiating position in the global food economy. Disadvantageous negotiations with powerful American and multilateral institutions have resulted in increased food insecurity.

This research was focused upon the food security of thirty women volunteer participants and the food survival strategies they employ in the social and spatial bargaining arenas. In this chapter I will summarize the research study and highlight the theoretical and methodological approaches that were employed to elucidate the voices of these marginalized urban women, voices that the global power structures render as invisible. This invisibility does not occur as producers of manufactured goods, as explained by Wright in her work in China and Mexico, rather their contribution occurs as the reproduction of their socio-economic life patterns are structured as an externality to the neoliberal global food system. Following this is a discussion of policy implications and possible future research.

## 7.2 Summary of Research Study

This geographic research study has discussed the international actors involved in the historical and current context of Haiti in the global food economy and the effect that Haiti's geopolitical position has had on shaping the lives of thirty women volunteer participants in urban Cap Haitien. By examining the social and spatial bargaining arenas of the participants I have linked the local to the global. However the analysis did not end here. In the spirit of feminist political ecology these same arenas were analyzed for gendered relations which impacted the roles women performed and their bargaining of entitlements, thus affecting their food security.

The chosen theoretical underpinning, feminist political ecology, allowed for the recognition of the interconnectedness of the lives of the women participants with relevant power structures operating at various scales. These national and international power relations disrupted the societal rules governing entitlement to food, and affected the women's bargaining position and decision-making in social and spatial arenas where they procured food. The participants' livelihood systems are linked into national and global economic and political systems which shape, enable, and limit the opportunities and constraints occurring in the lives of these thirty participants. The methodological approach of PAR linked the feminist political theory to practice. By placing the volunteer participants in control of the direction and outcome of the process, it was possible to acknowledge their situated knowledge and their gendered experience in the construction of place and space. This method allowed for the voices of the women to be heard and recorded throughout this research study thereby grounding the research and staying true to the feminist approach and PAR methodology.

Foreign American agribusinesses are extracting wealth from the Haitian economy by effectively monopolizing staple food markets with cheap imports. This extraction of wealth has reduced economic opportunities for subsistence farmers to sell on the local market and initiated the collapse of the internal food economy. This change in the internal food economy has forced the migration of many farmers off the land to urban centres in search of food security and opportunities within the cash economy. These processes

demonstrate the linkages between the difficulties of procuring food in urban Haiti and the global political economy of food, and underscore the structural nature of food insecurity.

For women this migration has resulted in the collapse of a traditional rural family centred on agriculture and their position as vendors of food produced in the internal food trade sector. In the urban centres women negotiated gendered roles in the four arenas of household, community, markets and institutions to find new survival strategies to access food. These gendered roles were sustained through public performances, or contested and subverted in hidden transcripts that demonstrated the continuous reorganization of social spaces.

In these international relations, these thirty women participants are involuntarily part of a circuit of the global food economy. Their situated knowledge is neither recognized as being present, nor acknowledged as meaningful and valuable. The Haitian food economy has become disembodied from the local by international forces, and the subjects of that disembodiment, and their suffering, remain invisible to the powerful forces that have instituted the changes. In this sense, the women participants' increased suffering has become an externality to the neoliberal agenda. They are geographically and historically constituted subjects, a position that endeavours to remove their agency, yet which the participants attempt to resist by shaping their survival strategies to meet their household food needs. This ebb and flow of power indicates that the women are both shapers, and are shaped by, the processes and contexts of their lives, but this power wanes in favour of the neoliberal agenda as it structures the women's lives with uneven economic and social change leaving their suffering invisible as it increases their food insecurity.

### 7.3 Policy Implications

Policy makers and advocacy groups may utilize the findings of this study in order to understand the impact of the changing food economy on poor urban women. A feminist political ecological approach has the potential of aiding policy design by understanding the gendered positions of men and women and how they operate in bargaining arenas and the wider economy. This attention to gender and the impact of the

political economy will address issues that erode sustainable futures, and for overcoming rather than exacerbating causes of poverty and making gender and class based inequities into obstacles to participation. We need to examine the state and institutions' ideological stances to find points of access for gendered participation to aid global policy makers and to understand the impact that decisions have on the nation and local communities.

Through this research Rayjon Share Care will have a richer understanding of the socio-economic group that they purport to aid. Although this research emphasized the heterogeneity of the participant group, and that the results were not generalizable to the larger population, the knowledge accumulated from this research can be used to form policies for the socio-economic group that accesses the centre. This research clearly demonstrates the challenges faced by these women, and that women are not 'task' doers as women are often constructed as being, but rather they contemplate responses to a difficult situation driven from external sources. This research explains that by recreating small commerce women the Centre only perpetuates a cycle of poverty. More effort is needed to challenge the gendered social norms that create inequality for women and keep them oppressed, both within the Centre and in Haitian society. To accomplish these ends professional staff rather than management by a religious order is required. Programming should include regular literacy classes, greater support for business ideas beyond marginal commerce activities, gender and human rights seminars, and legal aid to assist women to assert their rights. I am not advocating that women should forgo their commerce activities, however I am suggesting that small loans to support small commerce is not enough. To truly assist these women a staff with a deep understanding of gendered social norms in Haiti is needed. Furthermore, as indicated by the women, an investment in urban agriculture is desired to add to their existing commerce activities. However, this activity too must be completed with the purpose of assisting women to challenge and change the gendered roles that keep them oppressed.

### 7.4 Future Research

Many opportunities exist for future research concerning urban women and their food security in the ever deepening crisis in Haiti. First, Haiti's dependence on foreign imports has left its citizens vulnerable to price spikes in the global market. Rebuilding the

agricultural system following the earthquake in 2010 has become a priority for international organizations and the government of Haiti. Grass-roots women's organizations and mixed gender neighbourhood organizations have begun urban agricultural activities in an attempt to reduce their food insecurity. These projects are assisted by the Haitian Ministry of Agriculture and the International Organization of Migration (IOM). Research is needed to assess whether these opportunities actually mitigate food security or just add additional work onto female participants without benefit, and reinstate the colonized mindset. A gender analysis is needed in order to aid IOM to properly assist these efforts and ensure the knowledge and gender specific needs of women are met and not omitted, as is often the case in projects offered by international organizations.

Second, further research is needed to draw the linkages between the new global food trade market and the continued degradation of the environment. In particular, has the abandonment of horizontal networks to the rural landscape for vertical networks and market relations been the reason for the continued environmental destruction in Haiti? These types of linkages have been made in other regional contexts and would be helpful for advocates that support agricultural renewal. More specifically, one could investigate whether horizontal networks facilitate women's conservation practices. Studies could record the stories of women and men regarding their changed responsibilities for the conservation of the natural resource base.

Third, outside of food security the topic of *restavecs* arose. It was of interest to learn that poor families, not just the wealthy, participated in the practice of taking in abandoned, orphaned, or purchased children as house servants without appropriate pay or regard for their education. This phenomenon and the resulting social consequences would make an interesting study, particularly when trying to conceive how a food insecure household can rationalize feeding another child when they already have their own to complete household chores. Is there an attempt to receive money for the labour of this child? Is gender the issue: are the biological children of the family male? Or is it simply a matter of status?

Finally, having volunteered with an NGO in Haiti it would be of great personal interest to me to research and write about the manipulative relationship that exists between the Haitians and the NGO world. NGOs cannot exist without the presence of projects that are often unsustainable and Haitians create projects that rarely succeed. It is a symbiotic relationship that creates sustainable suffering in Haiti. Yet it is also my belief that through a feminist approach utilizing PAR that a bridge can be built to allow NGOs to assist rather than direct grass-root activities to successful outcomes.

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# APPENDICES
## Appendix 1: Ethics Approval

**Office of Research Ethics**
The University of Western Ontario
Room 4180 Support Services Building, London, ON Canada N6A 5C1
Telephone: (519) 661-3036 Fax: (519) 850-2466 Email: ethics@uwo.ca
Website: www.uwo.ca/research/ethics

**Use of Human Subjects - Ethics Approval Notice**

**Principal Investigator:** Dr. R. Bezner Kerr
**Review Number:** 15989S
**Review Date:** April 27 2010
**Revision Number:** 1
**Approved Local # of Participants:** 40
**Review Level:** Expedited

**Protocol Title:** Gender and Food Security for Rural Migrant Women in Haiti
**Department and Institution:** Geography, University of Western Ontario
**Sponsor:**
**Ethics Approval Date:** April 27 2010
**Expiry Date:** August 31, 2011
**Documents Reviewed and Approved:** Revised Study End Date
**Documents Received for Information:**

This is to notify you that The University of Western Ontario Research Ethics Board for Non-Medical Research Involving Human Subjects (NMREB) which is organized and operates according to the Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct of Research Involving Humans and the applicable laws and regulations of Ontario has granted approval to the above referenced revision(s) or amendment(s) on the approval date noted above.

This approval shall remain valid until the expiry date noted above assuming timely and acceptable responses to the NMREB's periodic requests for surveillance and monitoring information. If you require an updated approval notice prior to that time you must request it using the UWO Updated Approval Request Form.

During the course of the research, no deviations from, or changes to, the study or consent form may be initiated without prior written approval from the NMREB except when necessary to eliminate immediate hazards to the subject or when the change(s) involve only logistical or administrative aspects of the study (e.g. change of monitor, telephone number). Expedited review of minor change(s) in ongoing studies will be considered. Subjects must receive a copy of the signed information/consent documentation.

Investigators must promptly also report to the NMREB:

a) changes increasing the risk to the participant(s) and/or affecting significantly the conduct of the study;
b) all adverse and unexpected experiences or events that are both serious and unexpected;
c) new information that may adversely affect the safety of the subjects or the conduct of the study.

If these changes/adverse events require a change to the information/consent documentation and/or recruitment advertisement, the newly revised information/consent documentation, and/or advertisement, must be submitted to this office for approval.

Members of the NMREB who are named as investigators in research studies, or declare a conflict of interest, do not participate in discussion related to, nor vote on, such studies when they are presented to the NMREB.

Chair of NMREB: Dr. Jerry Paquette
FDA Reg # FWA 00000941

Ethics Officer to Contact for Further Information

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Grace Kelly | Janice Sutherland | Elizabeth Wambolt | Denise Grafton |

cc: GEO File

## Appendix 2: Informed Consent – English

**INTRODUCTION: Translator, please read the following to the participant and check the box once you have read the sentence:**

☐ I am working with the Sacred Heart Centre investigating how the women from our nutrition program access food for their families.

☐ We are doing a survey to know more about your eating habits, and how you obtain the food that you consume. This information is used as on going evaluation of the programs offered at the SHC.

☐ I am wondering if I can ask you some questions. If you choose to proceed with this interview, you will be interviewed for about 1-2 hours today.

☐ Your participation is voluntary, and you have the right to not answer any or all of the questions at any time.

☐ If at any time you are u27ncomfortable about the interview you have the right to withdraw your participation.

☐ All of your answers will be treated as confidential by the research staff. Your identity will be protected in all discussions and material produced for any and all interviews.

☐ Summary documents of research findings (not individual surveys) will be made available in Creole and English to the Research Team of SHC, the Justinien Health Committees, the Area Health Committees, the Ministry of Health and the participants once the results have been analysed.

☐ If you have a question about the study I can be contacted through the SHC, by phone at xxxxxxxx. Sr. Grace, the director of the project at SHC, Cap Haitien may be contacted at xxxxxxxx for further information or if you have any questions or wish to submit a complaint about the study.

☐ We are not here as part of a relief program, and will not be obligated to provide any food or donation to you or your village as a result of the interview, we are only trying to evaluate food security in Cap Haitien.

☐ **Do you agree to continue with this interview?** **✖ Yes** **✖ No**

## Appendix 3: Informed Consent – Creole

**INTRODUCTION: Translator, please read the following to the participant and check the box once you have read the sentence:**

☐ Map travay avek S.S.K. map fe investigasyon pou fanm avek koman yo jwen manje yo.

☐ Nap fe yon analiz sou koman yo manje koman yo jwen manje yo manje a. Enfomasyon

sa se yon evalyasyo nap fe pou S.S.K.

☐ Mwen vle konen eske mwen ka mande ou enpe keksyon , si ou ta chwazi pou continye entevyou a li tap pran 1-2h tan.

☐ Patisipasyon ou se Selman volanteman , ou gen dwa pou pa repon keksyon yo.

☐ Si a nenpot le ou ta santi ou mal alez pandan entevyou a ou ka soti san pwoblem.

☐ Tout repons ou bay , nap sevi avek yo kom sekre. Nap pwoteje ou, nou pa p bay enfomasyon ou bay lot moun oswa lot pwogram.

☐ Rezilta pwogram nana p an Kreyol , Angle . Nap bay S.S.K. ,Jistiyen Lopital, avek A.H.C. yo pou yo ka analize yo.(Men se pa enfomasyon pesonel).

☐ Si ou gen keksyon de pwogram nan ou ka kontakte Sr Jozet direktris pwogram nan xxxxxxxx pou plis enfomasyon oswa si out a renmen pote plent de investigasyon sa a.

☐ Nou pa fe pati de yon pwogram kap bay ed ni se pa yon obligasyon pou nou bay moun manje nan pwogram sa. Selman nap evalye sekirite manje nan Cap Haitian.

☐ **Eske ou dako pou kontinye entevyou a?** **✖ Wi** **✖ No**

## Appendix 4: Confidentiality Agreement for Co-researcher and Translators

Jennifer Vansteenkiste, Research Coordinator

MA Candidate, Department of Geography

University of Western Ontario, London

Phone: In Haiti: xxxxxxxx In Canada: xxxxxxxx

Re: Gender and Food Security Survey

**Study purpose:** We are doing a study to learn about the barriers that women face while trying to secure nutritious food for their families. This will help us to discover the successes, challenges, and failures which women face, and will let the SHC staff assess programming to ensure it meets the needs of women and their families.

**What is involved:** A number of participatory techniques including structured and semi-structured interviews, focus groups, and mapping will be performed. The exercises will be conducted in Creole with translations during and after.

**Confidentiality:** To ensure the confidentiality of the participant, each person will be assigned a coded number. All coded identities will be kept by the principle researcher and any translations will be referred to only by the assigned code. All translated material must be password protected on a data stick and on the laptop of the principle researcher only. At no time will the translations be shared with other respondents, staff members other interested persons. Confidentiality is of utmost importance.

**Voluntary Participation and Freedom to withdraw:** Participation in this study is voluntary. You may refuse to participate, refuse to answer any questions or withdraw from the study at any time as the co-researcher / translator.

**Questions or concerns:** If you have any questions about this study, you can call the Director of the SHC, Sr. Grace at xxxxxxxx or the Research Coordinator, Jennifer Vansteenkiste at xxxxxxxx.

By signing the agreement you agree to the above mentioned terms, that everything said during the interview is confidential and that your participation is voluntary.

Signature: Date:

Witness: Date:

## Appendix 5: Semi-structured Interview Questionnaire

| 1. Participant Group * | 2. Neighbourhood Name | 2. Name of Translator(s) | 3. Date |
|---|---|---|---|
| Field Researchers | | Jean Pierre | |

* Participant Group: micro-credit women, nutrition women, agronomist, shopkeeper, market women, farmers in peri-urban etc.

**INTRODUCTION: Translator, please read the following to the participant and check the box once you have read the sentence:**

- ☐ I am working with the Sacred Heart Centre investigating how the women from our nutrition program access food for their families.
- ☐ We are doing a survey to know more about your eating habits, and how you obtain the food that you consume. This information is used as on going evaluation of the programs offered at the SHC.
- ☐ I am wondering if I can ask you some questions. If you choose to proceed with this interview, you will be interviewed for about 1-2 hours today.
- ☐ Your participation is voluntary, and you have the right to not answer any or all of the questions at any time.
- ☐ If at any time you are uncomfortable about the interview you have the right to withdraw your participation.
- ☐ All of your answers will be treated as confidential by the research staff. Your identity will be protected in all discussions and material produced for any and all interviews.
- ☐ Summary documents of research findings (not individual surveys) will be made available in Creole and English to the Research Team of SHC, the Justinien Health Committees, the Area Health Committees, the Ministry of Health and the participants once the results have been analysed.
- ☐ If you have a question about the study I can be contacted through the SHC, by phone at xxxxxxxx. Sr. Grace, the director of the project at SHC, Cap Haitien may be contacted at xxxxxxxx for further information or if you have any questions or wish to submit a complaint about the study.

☐ We are not here as part of a relief program, and will not be obligated to provide any food or donation to you or your village as a result of the interview, we are only trying to evaluate food security in Cap Haitien.

☐ **Do you agree to continue with this interview?** **✖ Yes** **✖ No**

1. What is your name?
2. How old are you? _____ 15 – 20 years ____ 21-40 years ____ > 40 years
3. What is your marital status? (circle): married polygamous widow single divorced co-habitating
4. If you are married does you husband live with you? If no, then where does he live?
5. How many children live with you?
6. How many children under the age of 16 do you have that live somewhere else?
7. How many children do you care for daily, including meals?
8. How many children under five years old live in this household, and how old they are? (include orphans, step-children).

| **Child's Gender** | **Age** | **Relationship to child (use codes below)** | **Attends Nutrition Program** | **Attends School** |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |

Relationship to child can be identified with following codes:

_M__Child's mother
_PG_Child's paternal grandmother
_MG_Child's maternal grandmother
_S_Child's sister
_A_Child's aunt
_N_Child's neighboour
F__Child's father
GF__Child's grandfather
B__ Child's brother
U_ Child's uncle
Other (specify)_____

9. Did you migrate from outside of Cap Haitien?
10. If yes, from where?
11. When did you move to the city?
12. Why did you decide to leave the countryside? Please elaborate?

13. Do you live in the city? Do you live here all year?

14. If not why and where else do you live?
15. Do you travel to the countryside? If yes, do you collect food when you go or trade things? If yes, from whom and from where? Please tell us more.

16. Do you have a permanent home? If no, who do you live with?

Who do you live with (select as many choices as needed):

__Mother
__Father
__Paternal grandmother
__Grandfather
__Maternal grandmother
__ Brother
__Sister
__Uncle
__Aunt
__Other (specify)
__Neighbour
__Husband
__Children
__Friend

17. Where do you live in the city?
18. How many times have you had to move once you arrived in the city? Why did you move?
19. How did this affect your family?
20. How did this affect your ability to collect food and water?

**LABOUR**

21. Who is responsible for and who actually does the food collection? Please describe some of these activities.

22. What about water and fuel collection? Is the water clean—treated or filtered?

23. Who is responsible for, and who does the food preparation? Please describe some of these activities?

24. Do families get together to share the responsibility? If no, why? If yes, are there problems in this arrangement?

**FOOD ACCESS**

___**Translator, please read this introduction**: Now we are interested in finding out more about how you are able to obtain food. This may vary over the season and may be different today than last year. We would like to know about the strategies you use now and have used in the past, and why you have changed strategies and picked new methods.

25. Do you collect/obtain food everyday? Do you produce or purchase, or both?
25. Do you eat outside the home? Where?
26. Are you able to get the quantity of food you wish to have? Days without food? How often? Certain times of year are more difficult?

27. Are you able to get the types of food you wish to have?

28. Are you able to get good quality food?

29. What types of food do you typically eat?

30. Has the situation changed in the last 5 years and how?

31. Were some changes good or bad?

Access to Food (Food choices will be identified by Haitians)

| **Food type** | **Season** | **From where** | **Bought, traded, given** | **How many times/wk** | **Local or Imported** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |

Possible Sources for food.

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Own field | Roadside Vender | Stranger | mother-in-law |
| SHC | Market: Central | Neighbour | father-in-law |
| WFP | Market: Eastside | Friend | sister/brother |
| NGO | Market: Other town | Mother | sister/brother-in-law |
| (specify) | (specify) | Father | grandchild |
| Rural home | Peri-urban Garden Plot | aunt/uncle | grandparent |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| village | Urban Garden Plot | child<br>niece/nephew | stepchild<br>other (specify) |

32. Do you eat meals or snack or both?
33. Do children eat differently than you? When do they eat differently? Please explain?
34. Has this changed recently?
35. Do your eating habits change in times of scarcity and how?
36. How much of your income is spent on food?

37. Where do you get your food? Is it far or dangerous to go there? Do you like going there? We would like to know the difficulties you encounter when you collect food. Please tell us more.

Possible answers:
What prevents you from getting the food you need?

___Money ___Distance ___Not in season

___Not Available ___Too heavy

38. Would you prefer to get your food elsewhere? If yes, from where and why? Please tell us more?
39. If you had more resources would you eat differently and how?

40. Which foods are considered especially good or to be avoided in certain circumstances? Which foods and When?

41. Where are foods stored? Where are they cooked? At the household level?

42. Is collecting food for you and your family a good experience? How does it make you feel as a person? What kind of sacrifices do you have to make to obtain food? Please tell me more.

43. Do you share your food with people outside of your household? Who? Why? Are there left overs?

44. Tell me about your water supply?

45. FOR THOSE WHO HAVE NOT INDICATED THAT THEY GROW THEIR OWN FOOD. Would you consider growing your own food? If no, why? If yes, what stops you from growing your own food?

Can't grow my own food because ___I am not sure how ___I do not have anywhere to grow the food

___I do not have seeds, water, other (please specify) ___I do not have time

46. Is growing your own food an acceptable activity for women? Can you do this without the help of a man?

**INCOME GENERATION**

47. What kind of jobs do you do to make money?

48. Is this hard work? Do you enjoy doing this work?

49. Would you prefer to do something else? Please explain?

**Health**

Purpose- to determine if the young mothers are the ones who present malnourished children more frequently, and whether as the mothers age their subsequent children did not suffer from malnutrition- do the mothers report the same conclusions as the other reports and if so do the mothers cite socio-economic reasons and/or knowledge and/or greater social support and/or greater stability and/or other reasons for the change.

50. Did your children suffer from malnutrition?
51. All of your children, or just one? The first one?
52. Explain what was the cause of the malnutrition? Please describe?

## Appendix 6: Letter to Participant – English

INFORMATION LETTER FOR SHC PARTICIPANTS

Sr. Grace
Director of the Sacred Heart Centre
B.P 94, Cap Haitien, Haiti
Phone: xxxxxxxx

Jennifer Vansteenkiste, Research Coordinator
MA Student, Department of Geography
University of Western Ontario, London
Phone: In Haiti: xxxxxxxx In Canada: xxxxxxxx

Re: Gender and Food Security Survey

**Study purpose:** We are doing a study to learn about the barriers that women face while trying to secure nutritious food for their families. This will help us to discover the successes, challenges, and failures which women face, and will let the SHC staff assess programming to ensure it meets the needs of women and their families.

**What is involved:** If you agree to participate in the study, you will be asked some questions about your life experience as a women in rural and urban Haiti. You will be asked to comment on some of the successes, challenges, and failures of your ability to find food for your household, and to offer some possible solutions about how these challenges can be addressed. The interview will be conducted in Creole and should take approximately one hour. You may keep this letter for your records.

**Confidentiality:** Your name will not be used in the study. Only the researchers and the interpreter will be able to access the information that we collect today. If we publish or present the findings of this study, we will not use your name.

**Freedom to withdraw:** Participation in this study is voluntary. If you decide to participate, you may tell the interviewer at anytime that you wish to stop the interview. You do not need to answer any questions you do not want to answer.

**Questions or concerns:** If you have any questions about this study, you can call the Director of the SHC, Sr. Grace at xxxxxxxx or the Research Coordinator, Jennifer Vansteenkiste at xxxxxxxx.

## Appendix 7: Letter to Participant – Creole

Enfomasyon Let Pou Patisipan Yo Ki Nan SSK

Sr. Grace
Direktris Sant Sakre Ke
B.P 94, Kap Aysyen, Ayiti
Fon : xxxxxxxx

Jennifer Vansteenkiste, Koodinatris Rechech
MA Etidyan, Depatman Geografi
Inivesite Onterio Lwes, London
Fon: Ayiti: xxxxxxxx Kanada: xxxxxxxx

Re: Seks avek Sekirite Manje Swivi

**Study purpose:** Nou ap fe yon rechehc pou nou aprann pwoblem ki vinni an fas famn yo le y ap eseye jwen manje ki gen bon vale nitrisyon pou fanmi yo. Sa ap ede nou pou nou dekouvri mwayen nou ka reyisi, difikilte, avek dekourajman fanm an fas avek, nap pemet SSK jwenn akse pou yo fe. Pwogram pou tout fanm yo ka jwenn tout sa yo ap bezwen pou fanmi yo.

**Ki sa y konsiste:** Si ou dako pou patisipe nan rechech la, nap poze ou enpe kesyon de espeyans nan lavi pesonel ou kom yon fanm nan yon peyi tankou Ayiti. Nap mande ou pou bay kek lide sou enpe mwayen nou reyisi, enpe pwoblem, avek difikilte nan jan nou twouve manje pou. Kay nou , avek di enpe solisyon koman nou ka adrese pwoblem sa yo. Entevyou a ap an Kreyol. E li ka pran pweske 1 h tan. Ou te met kenbe yon kopi let sa pou ou menm.

**Sekre:** Nou pap sevi avek non ou nan rechech la. Sel moun kap fe rechech la avek moun kap tradi a kap gen akse enfomasyon nou ranmase nan entevyou a. Si nou ekri oswa presante sa. Nou te ranmase a nou pap sevi avek non ou.

**Libete pou refise:** patisipasyon noun an rechech la volonte. Si nou deside pou nou patisipe, nou met a ninpot le di moun kap fe entevyou a nou ta renmen kanpe y. Ou pa bezwen reponn. Nenpot kesyon ke ou pa vle reponn.

**Kesyon oswa konsey**: Si out a gen yon kesyon de rechech la, ou ka rele direktris SSK a, Sr. Grace nan fon xxxxxxxxx oswa koodinatris rechech la , Jennifer Vansteenkiste nan fon xxxxxxxxx.

## Appendix 8: Interview Codes

| I# | Pseudonym | | Role | Date Interviewed |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Mme Black | | Participant | May 15, 2009 |
| 2 | Mme Anne | | Participant | May 15, 2009 |
| 3 | Mme Star | | Participant | May 15, 2009 |
| 4 | Mme Mich | | Participant | May 16, 2009 |
| 5 | Mme Mark | | Participant | May 16, 2009 |
| 6 | Mme Jan | | Participant | May 16, 2009 |
| 7 | Mme Eli | | Participant | May 16, 2009 |
| 8 | Mme Nod | | Participant | May 17, 2009 |
| 9 | Mme Small | | Participant | May 17, 2009 |
| 10 | Mme Anis | | Participant | May 17, 2009 |
| 11 | Mme Myr | | Participant | May 18, 2009 |
| 12 | Mme Anton | | Participant | May 18, 2009 |
| 13 | Mme Mary | | Participant | May 18, 2009 |
| 14 | Mme Men | | Participant | May 19, 2009 |
| 15 | Mme Jeanne | | Participant | May 19, 2009 |
| 16 | Mme Elin | | Participant | May 19, 2009 |
| 17 | Mme Long | | Participant | May 20, 2009 |
| 18 | Mme Strong | | Participant | May 20, 2009 |
| 19 | Mme Jess | | Participant | May 20, 2009 |
| 20 | Mme Hill | | Participant | May 21, 2009 |
| 21 | Mme Bert | | Participant | May 21, 2009 |
| 22 | Mme Ali | | Participant | May 21, 2009 |
| 23 | M. G | | Agronomist | June 5, 2009 |
| 24 | M. R | | Farmer | May 24, 2009 |
| 25 | M. T | | Employee of NGO | June 10, 2009 |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 26 | M. M | | Employee of Institution | June 6, 2009 |
| 27 | M. B | | Agronomist | June 1, 2009 |
| 28 | M. D | | Employee of Institution | May 17, 2009 |
| 29 | M. J | | Employee of NGO | June 5, 2009 |
| 30 | Mme Mojo | | Market Woman | June 7, 2009 |
| 31 | Mme W | | Employee of NGO | June 5, 2009 |
| 32 | Mme Grace | | Employee of NGO | May 20, 2009 |
| 33 | Mme E | | Employee of NGO | June 4, 2009 |
| 34 | M. N | | Employee of NGO | May 17, 2009 |
| 35 | Human Rights Watch | | Employee of NGO | May 23, 2009 |
| 36 | AFASDA | | Employee of NGO | May 22, 2009 |
| 37 | Mme Starry | | Urban Gardening Project in Petite Anse | May 15, 2010 |